Commentary

Volume Seventy-six, Number One, July 1983

Appeasement By Any Other Name

Norman Podhoretz

EXCHANGES:

Strategic Superiority
Robert Jastrow & Critics

Gandhi
Richard Grenier & Critics

BOOKS:

James Nuechterlein
David Singer
Melville J. Ulmer
Eliot A. Cohen

Misreadings of Anti-Semitism
Jacob Katz

How the Schools Were Ruined
Joseph Adelson

Whatever Happened to Willy Brandt?
David Gress

Impersonations
Elizabeth Kristol

Mailer Hits Bottom
Joseph Epstein

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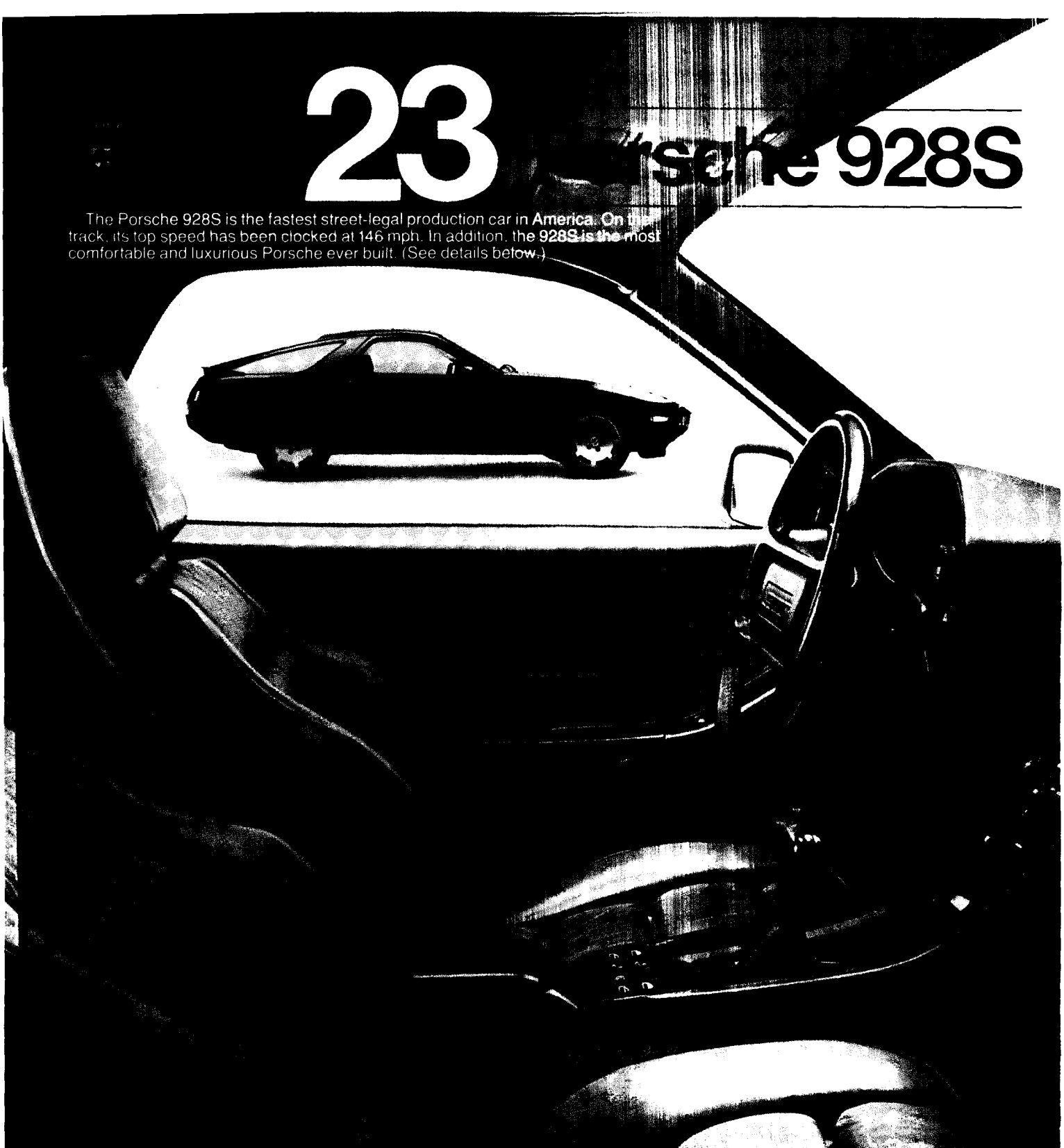

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Commentary

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Letters from Readers

Strategic Superiority

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow's otherwise excellent article, "Why Strategic Superiority Matters" [March], has two serious flaws. The first and foremost is his contention that the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) is based on the assumption that "both the U.S. and the USSR will freely offer up their populations for massacre"—a policy he says the Soviets have repudiated. In fact, all that MAD requires, from our point of view, is that the Russians are assured that after a (surprise) first strike by them on us, we retain the capacity and the will to destroy their homeland utterly. And this is indeed the case. Even if the USSR demolished all land-based U.S. ICBM's, all U.S. bombers, and all U.S. submarines in port (which is virtually impossible with present technology), the U.S. would have about 2,400 nuclear warheads on submarines at sea, essentially invulnerable to such preemptive attack. Mr. Jastrow claims that these could be used *only* to attack cities and soft targets, i.e., not hardened silos. In this he is correct and that is exactly what the function of our counterforce should be. What meaningful gain could be derived from striking at the remaining Soviet missile force after its primary echelons had already done the job? The very purpose of a retaliatory-strike capability in the context of MAD is to convince the aggressor that any strategic nuclear attack will bring certain and lasting destruction on himself. Clearly 2,400 warheads, each with at least several times the destructive power of those dropped on Japan, would eliminate from the map every large city and town in the USSR, in addition to destroying industrial, commercial, transportation, and communication facilities.

Mr. Jastrow asks what American President would order such retaliation faced with the certain knowledge of further Soviet strikes against our cities? A corollary question is what President would *not* order such a strike after 2,000 Soviet thermonuclear warheads had impacted on our territory? Such an attack, even directed only at our military facilities, would kill millions of Americans, both directly and via the effects of long-term fallout. The Russians must be convinced that instant retaliation—especially directed at their soft targets—would be the immediate consequence of a strategic first strike.

The second flaw is Mr. Jastrow's implication that civil, air, and missile defense would significantly mitigate the effects of a U.S. counterstrike. Most experts agree that civil defense would at best shield only a small fraction of the targeted population from the immediate blast, radiation, and thermal effects of the explosion. Even to accomplish this there would have to be widespread movement away from the population centers and/or into shelters, a process that would take considerable time and therefore give a clear warning of Soviet intentions. This would be more than sufficient for us to place our missile forces on alert status and would obviate a surprise attack. As for missile defense, Mr. Jastrow knows well that present Soviet capabilities don't come close to meeting the threat; very few of our counterstrike missiles would be stopped in this manner. Even the Russian defenses against skillfully piloted aircraft are imperfect, as has been artfully demonstrated by Israel in Lebanon.

The above having been said, I do not mean to imply that Mr. Jastrow's conclusion that the U.S. needs to improve and modernize, rather than dismantle, its nuclear arsenal is incorrect. Our present retaliatory capability will not last if we do not continue to develop newer technologies. The Soviets will eventually improve their ability to track and attack our submarines. Their weapons will become more accurate and they may develop an effective anti-missile capability. If we do nothing, or worse, dismantle our forces, we *will* eventually become vulnerable. But it is relatively easy for us to prevent this. By concentrating on small, mobile ICBM's (not superhardened MX's), by improving our strategic submarine fleet, and by keeping at the forefront of research on third-generation systems (space-based, anti-missile weapons), we can retain what Paul Nitze has referred to as Situation Q, i.e., "a situation in which the strategic nuclear deployments and capabilities of the two sides are such that neither side can hope to gain in

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relative enduring capabilities by initiating a strike against the nuclear forces of the other side."

LEWIS A. GLENN
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory
Livermore, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow has alarmed himself unnecessarily. He is quite right in thinking that the latest version of the Soviet SS-18 missile is probably accurate enough to destroy American Minuteman missiles in the Midwest. But he is quite wrong to think that the United States, in the wake of such an attack, would be forced to shoot at Soviet cities, or do nothing at all. There are many thousands of Soviet military targets in addition to hardened silos—air fields, tank parks, submarine bases, missile and warhead production facilities, warhead storage depots, communication centers, transshipment points, and so on. The National Strategic Target List at Offat Air Force Base near Omaha currently includes about 40,000 targets, the vast majority of them military in nature, and all but a very few vulnerable to attack by SLBM's and other delivery systems.

A Soviet attack on U.S. Minuteman silos, air bases, and submarine bases would involve several thousand nuclear explosions on U.S. territory. U.S. casualties would include from three to twenty million dead, depending on the exact nature of the attack, weather patterns, and the like. This would be a catastrophic event in American history. It would be followed by a catastrophic event in Russian history—the detonation of several thousand warheads on Soviet territory, but not including cities. The literature on NSDM 242 and Presidential Directive 59 makes this fact abundantly clear. If Mr. Jastrow doesn't believe what he reads, he might try a few phone calls. There are many officials in Washington who would be glad to tell him that a Soviet nuclear attack on the United States would be followed by a comparable American nuclear attack on the Soviet Union, and that our attack would hurt just as much as their attack.

If strategic superiority matters, Robert Jastrow does not know why.

THOMAS POWERS
South Royalton, Vermont

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

While in general agreement with Robert Jastrow's historical review in the first part of his "Why Strategic Superiority Matters," I believe his subsequent analysis of whether the Soviet Union has a preemptive first-strike capability against the United States could have profited by addressing some additional issues. . . .

First, Mr. Jastrow fails to address explicitly the usefulness of a launch-on-warning posture by the United States. . . . Mr. Jastrow's analysis assumes that after the Soviet Union launches some 2,000 warheads in a preemptive-strike attempt, the U.S. response would be simply to leave its 1,000 Minutemen in their silos to suffer the full brunt of such an all-out attack. If the Minutemen were instead launched on warning, the United States would have up to 1,000 MIRV-ed missiles (about 3,000 warheads) with which to strike "hard" military targets in the Soviet Union. . . . Do the benefits of a launch-on-warning posture offset the presumably increased risks of a false warning precipitating a thermonuclear exchange? . . .

Second, Mr. Jastrow concludes, and I agree, that the United States can no longer threaten the use of its strategic weapons to make up for the inadequacies of its conventional-force capabilities. ("Twenty years ago, or even ten years ago, the American nuclear arsenal would have been sufficient to deter a Soviet attack on Western Europe, but that is no longer the case.") But . . . Mr. Jastrow begs the question of what the United States should do about this situation. . . .

Even with respect to nuclear weapons, he gives no clear-cut prescriptions. . . . He fails to tell us what, if anything, the United States can do to improve its strategic posture in the short term, through the 1980's. Furthermore, given his condemnation of MAD, Mr. Jastrow is curiously silent about U.S. efforts to move away from the MAD doctrine, such as Presidential Directive 59 (set forth in the Carter administration and the goal of which is the implementation of a survivable, highly flexible counterforce strategy).

Finally, Mr. Jastrow implies that the U.S. would be in a good position if only it had more accurate and survivable missiles than the Soviet Union. Still, such efforts may fall short of providing stable *strategic* deterrence. Even a clear-cut U.S. numerical superiority in missiles would not prevent the Soviet Union from attempting a preemptive strike if, by striking first, it could destroy the U.S. military command's ability to conduct an effective retaliation. The Achilles heel of U.S. strategic posture is the strategic-command system, at least according to John D. Steinbruner ("Nuclear Decapitation," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1982). Steinbruner claims: "Fewer than 100 judiciously targeted nuclear weapons could so severely damage U.S. communications facilities and command centers . . . that the actions of individual weapons commanders could no longer be controlled or coordinated. . . "

Steinbruner believes there is no technological solution to the problem of command-structure vulnerability and consequently that profound changes in U.S. strategic doctrine are necessary. I would welcome an informed discussion of whether this command-structure vulnerability really is a challenge to some of the fundamental assumptions on which national security rests.

WILLIAM E. HEWITT
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I find the belief in our nation's vulnerability to a Soviet counterforce or emasculation missile strike to be completely implausible.

Soviet missiles are not now nor could they ever realistically be accurate enough to accomplish the sort of strike against America's land-based missiles that Robert Jastrow and a number of defense analysts fear. I admit that under *ideal* test conditions, Soviet rocket scientists have achieved a CEP (Circular Error Probability) of 450 meters with warheads, an accuracy which, if accomplished under actual wartime conditions on a vast scale, would be sufficient to knock out our land-based missiles in their silos. However, it should be kept in mind that a CEP of 450 meters does *not* mean that every warhead is guaranteed to hit within 150 meters of a target. Rather, it means that 50 percent of the warheads will fall within a circle whose radius is 150 meters—and 50 percent of the warheads will fall anywhere outside the circle. Under actual wartime conditions, however, it would be realistically impossible to achieve such deadly accuracy 50 percent of the time. The Soviets would be lucky to achieve

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such accuracy on a wide scale 25 percent of the time. . . .

This means that Soviet warheads would be falling all over our country, many unintentionally on or near civilian population centers. Even with an ideal level of accuracy, the Soviets would have to allot three (not the two that Mr. Jastrow claims in his article) warheads to each of our 1,054 land-based missiles to knock out about 90 percent of our land-based missile force. America would be saturated with 1,500 nuclear warheads detonating in places other than our missile silos. In addition, many of our missile silos are in or near enough to civilian population centers so that even Soviet warheads that were precisely on target would still produce great numbers of civilian casualties. The missiles inevitably hitting off-target would produce tens of millions of civilian casualties.

Thus a Soviet counterforce strike only against our land-based missile silos would inexorably produce such a high level of civilian casualties that it would be indistinguishable from a Soviet attack deliberately intended to kill large numbers of our civilians and produce widescale civilian property damage. . . .

Another serious flaw in Mr. Jastrow's fearful reasoning is the implicit misconception that the United States would passively ride out an enemy attack, after which our leadership would very carefully assess the damage and circumspectly consider options before deciding whether to launch a retaliatory strike. But actually, at the time of the attack, we would be operating under either a launch-under-attack policy or an attack-on-warning policy, the latter being likely in a time of great international tension. Under an attack-on-warning policy, our retaliation would be ordered when it is obvious that Soviet warheads are on the way; thus many of their warheads would explode on empty American silos whose missiles had aready been launched at the USSR.

Under the launch-under-attack policy, the policy that is usually in effect, our retaliatory forces—land-based missiles, bombers, and submarine-launched missiles—would go into action as soon as it were obvious that America was under attack. Contingency systems would insure that our retaliation would be prompt, even if the President were killed at the outset, or were out of communication, or if our military's main command-and-communication centers were destroyed. Thus the long and thoughtful pause envisaged by Mr. Jastrow after a Soviet counterforce attack, during which our leadership is supposed to decide to surrender to the Soviet Union, is, in practice, an impossibility. It does not stand up to analysis.

I think Mr. Jastrow makes far too much of the Soviet civil-defense program, a program that many Russians regard as no more than a joke. Realistically it would not save more than a handful of Soviet citizens in a nuclear attack; it would not prevent the widespread deaths from disease, famine, radiation, exposure, and civil dislocation that would follow a nuclear war; and it would do very little to preserve the USSR's industrial capacity. The Soviets know that their civil-defense measures, while perhaps enabling some of their governmental and technocratic elite to survive a nuclear war, would not be able to prevent civilian casualties on a horrendous scale.

Mr. Jastrow is quite wrong in claiming that the Russians have "rejected" the idea of "avoiding nuclear war." The Russians have most certainly been very careful about avoiding nuclear war, for they realize that a nuclear war would destroy the USSR as a viable, modern nation. Mr. Jastrow has used some quotations and citations out of context to present a very distorted and hence highly inaccurate view of how the Soviet leadership thinks about nuclear war. In arguing against Malenkov, who believed that a nuclear war would destroy world civilization, Khrushchev did claim, from an abstract standpoint in keeping with Marxist theory, that socialism would survive a nuclear war while capitalism would not. But Mr. Jastrow does not present Khrushchev's complete statement in which he admitted that the Soviet Union would suffer very grievously from a nuclear war, and that therefore the Soviet Union should be very careful to avoid a nuclear war. . . . Mr. Jastrow ignores the fact that Khrushchev believed, as most of the Soviet leadership now believes, that socialism can and will win over capitalism without resort to nuclear war.

Mr. Jastrow also ignores the fact that Khrushchev instituted cutbacks in Soviet military strength and expressed the belief that the Soviet Union could possess only a fraction of the nuclear weapons possessed by its enemies and still be safe from a nuclear attack because enough Soviet weapons would survive the attack to be able to devastate the attacker. Yes, Khrushchev, in contrast to Mr. Jastrow's distorted view of him, was amenable to what we in the West call the idea of nuclear "sufficiency."

Mr. Jastrow, along with many other defense analysts, misperceives the function of the Soviet military and the significance of speculative statements found in various Soviet military publications.

The Soviet military does not make operative policy, and is under the control of the Soviet Communist party. The Soviet military is the obedient implementer of policy decisions of the Soviet leadership. . . . Thus various speculative opinions, essentially abstract in nature, in military publications should not be taken as irrevocably binding on the Soviet leadership. It may be true that one opinion found in Soviet military publications is that once a nuclear war is considered inevitable, the best way to fight it would be to strike first. But it is understood that the decision to strike would not rest with the Soviet military. This idea of striking first if a strike by the enemy is considered inevitable, of "beating the enemy to the punch," as the expression goes, has also been expressed by American civilian and military thinkers—it's called "preemption." But because some American analysts have speculated on the possibility of launching a preemptive strike against the Soviet Union does not mean that the United States is implacably bent on launching such a strike and that America's strategic nuclear weapons have been built with only such a preemptive strike in mind. . . .

The Soviet leadership does, in fact, believe in deterrence. In the late 40's and early 50's, when the United States possessed a nuclear monopoly, the Soviets believed that their capability to overrun Western Europe kept them safe from an American nuclear attack, while we believed that our capability to attack the Soviet Union with nuclear weapons kept the Soviets from overrunning Western Europe with their army. From the time that both sides possessed nuclear weapons in large numbers, the Soviet Union has believed that its ability to retaliate with nuclear weapons has kept it safe from nuclear attack.

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The Soviet leadership doesn't want a nuclear war and has established its strategic nuclear forces to prevent a nuclear attack upon the Soviet homeland, not for the purpose of initiating an unprovoked nuclear attack upon the United States. . . .

It may be true that some Soviet generals have expressed the belief that a nuclear war is "winnable," according to some special definition of victory. But Mr. Jastrow and other defense analysts ignore the fact that other Soviet generals, as well as civilian Soviet leaders, have expressed the view that victory in a nuclear war is a meaningless concept. And even those Soviets who do believe that victory of some sort is possible in a nuclear war, don't actually want a nuclear war.

JOSEPH FORBES
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Robert Jastrow makes it seem that the USSR has left the U.S. in the dust in the nuclear-arms race when others cite good sources to show that the Soviets have simply reached parity, making the present a unique opportunity for both sides to accept a freeze on a further nuclear arms build-up (see Randall Forsberg, "A Bilateral Nuclear-Weapons Freeze," *Scientific American*, November 1982). I wonder where Mr. Jastrow gets his facts.

His assumption that counterforce strategies can replace MAD ignores the fact that nuclear weapons yield massive destruction and that many military installations are in or near major population centers. Tens of millions will die in either case. Furthermore, since accuracy is the key to an effective counterforce strategy, and American missiles have long been recognized as having greater accuracy, who would be more likely to use counterforce strategy? As argued by three experts in the April 1983 issue of the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, counterforce strategy would probably take out a nation's command-and-control capabilities, thus insuring escalation to all-out nuclear war. It is therefore more dangerous than MAD. . . .

Mr. Jastrow seems to assume Soviet imperialistic intentions in the nuclear arms build-up. George F. Kennan, whose credentials for understanding the Soviet mind carry far more weight than Mr. Jastrow's, explains Soviet military paranoia in a light far more congruent with history. After all, the Russians suffered terrible casualties in their own homeland in the last world war, as they have in other wars. They are surrounded by their traditional enemies, and the U.S. seems to be aggravating the situation by arming some of them with weapons of massive destruction. . . .

JAMES H. CARLISLE
Riverside, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . I take exception to Robert Jastrow's belief that the Soviets "reject the view, so widely held in America, that the mass detonation of nuclear weapons would mean the end of civilization. . . ." In fact, they renounce the first use of nuclear weapons, while first use is our official policy in case of an invasion of Western Europe. Our Vice President said three years ago that we could win a nuclear war, President Carter developed a plan (Presidential Directive 59) to fight one, and we talk of limiting such a war to Europe. . . .

That the Soviet build-up began in 1963 should tell us something. In 1963 we had nuclear superiority and the Russians had been embarrassed by the Cuban missile crisis. Isn't it possible that what Mr. Jastrow considers a build-up in order to win a nuclear war if it broke out is only an attempt to build up an arsenal so that they need never be embarrassed again? That is how I read it, since they now want a freeze while not one expert on our side is willing to trade nuclear arsenals with the Soviet Union. . . .

Next we come to perhaps the backbone of Mr. Jastrow's case. I will not dispute his assertion that the destructive power of the Soviet nuclear arsenal is about twice as great as that of the United States. What is groundless and dangerously incorrect is his statement that "the missile forces of the Soviet Union also have a combination of accuracy, destructive power, and numbers that will enable them to destroy most of our Minuteman missiles in their silos in a preemptive first strike. We lack any such capa-

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bility. In other words, the Soviet Union has strategic superiority." All the data that I am aware of . . . clearly show that the Soviets do not have a first-strike capability, but that the next generation of weapons (MX and Trident 2, as well as the probable Soviet weapons of the 1990's) will change that. To me, this is the reason it is imperative that we have a nuclear freeze now, before the new technology undermines MAD and gives whichever side strikes first a possible chance of "winning a nuclear war." . . .

If the Soviet Union wants a nuclear war, the species homo sapiens will be extinct by the year 2000. If it does not, then MAD is valid and will be in effect until the next generation of strategic weapons is deployed (hence the necessity of a freeze) regardless of Soviet civil-defense measures or rhetoric to the contrary. . . .

ROBERT DEBARE
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Coming from the NASA area of Cleveland, as I did, I had complete faith in Robert Jastrow's "Why Strategic Superiority Matters." But a doctor relative (retired colonel) and a Common Cause associate (retired colonel) both say our Tridents know precisely where they are at all times. Who's right?

VIVIAN BENTON-RUBEL
Clearwater, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow argues that because of its strategic superiority the Soviet Union could launch a preemptive first strike against our land-based missiles without threatening our civilian population. Our only response would be to destroy its cities from our submarines, and that would be suicidal because it would unleash a Soviet second-strike attack against our cities.

Leaving aside the enormous risk that such a preemptive attack would inflict serious civilian casualties, and an exceedingly generous assessment of our patience while our missiles were being destroyed, what would the Soviets have gained? Our real deterrent would still be intact. Could the Soviets move on Western Europe? No more than before they destroyed our land-based missiles. This argument merely confirms the relative uselessness of our land-based missiles except as a first-strike weapon.

Later in his article, after having conceded that we can overkill the Soviet Union from our submarines alone, Mr. Jastrow then unthinkingly argues that if conventional war breaks out, Soviet nuclear superiority becomes the decisive factor. Why? If we could destroy the Soviet Union 10 times over rather than 5 times over, would that help us repel a conventional attack? Would it make the Soviets less likely to launch a conventional attack?

A nuclear response might be precluded in a conventional attack because of the retaliatory implications. But this is not an argument in favor of strategic superiority. It is an argument for building up our conventional might, not for sinking billions more into demonstrably useless equipment like the MX.

RALPH ROSKIES
Department of Physics
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow's article lacks completeness. It is true that . . . strategic parity is more stable than the overwhelming superiority of a ruthless adversary. But the second aspect of strategic policy is the avoidance of overwhelmingly large numbers of strategic weapons on earth. There are always some unintended consequences in the implementation of national-security systems: witness two world wars in this century. There is also the risk of accidental explosion as the absolute number of weapons on earth increases. The cost of losing influence in the world has to be measured in light of this risk as well as others.

The advocates of the nuclear-freeze political movement know that, in a simplistic sense, "strategic superiority matters" and "better Red than dead." But neither of these views solves the problem: freeze advocates are driving the governments of America and Russia to face the complicated task of negotiating a condominium of national-security interests that will reduce the risk of intentional war, semi-intentional war, and purely accidental nuclear explosion.

JOHN GELLES
Ventura, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The emperor has clothes! The emperor has clothes! Strategic superiority does matter! Alas, my already battered convictions that apologists for the current massive build-up in the American nuclear arsenal are both logical and well-intentioned were dealt yet another blow by Robert Jastrow's article. . . . I read the article in the hope that he could convince me that our submarine-based missiles are not sufficient to counter any Soviet nuclear threat, but it was a vain hope indeed. . . .

Mr. Jastrow is apparently suggesting that if the Soviets launched 2,000 warheads targeted on our 1,054 missile silos (his figures), equivalent to an attack several *million* times more devastating than the one launched against Hiroshima, the American government would simply go about its business as usual, wait for the fallout to disperse, and then call everyone out of his basement. Why? To protect our cities—now lacking some of the amenities we've grown to love (like edible food, potable water, and breathable air), but the best we have, I guess.

This is absolute madness of the most incredible kind. Our submarine-based missiles are a perfect deterrent precisely because they cannot destroy the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Were they able to do so, for precisely the reasons Mr. Jastrow advances in support of his arguments, the Soviets would be tempted to develop and use their first-strike capability lest they lose their ability to respond to an American attack. Short of President Reagan's *Star Wars* defensive shield, the Soviets' understanding that we can destroy their society as now constituted after a first strike remains the best deterrent against such an attack.

DAVID G. POST
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow's plea for nuclear superiority seems logical and convincing—until one realizes that Mr. Jastrow has finessed the issue of adequate nuclear defense and is really advocating a strategy for a limited nuclear war.

Mr. Jastrow's whole argument rests on the idea that the policy of Mutual Assured Destruction (which he concedes will prevent war so long as both sides believe in it) has been undermined by the Soviets' ability to destroy our ICBM's; the Soviets could thus wage war on us while avoiding the large-scale destruction of their own society. . . .

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According to Mr. Jastrow, the key to our supposed lack of nuclear deterrence is the fact that our submarines can only hit cities, not missile silos. But this conclusion represents a complete departure from logic. Mr. Jastrow has, in fact, inadvertently confirmed just the opposite proposition: since we do have the capability to obliterate Soviet population centers even if all our ICBM's were knocked out, Soviet superiority is a delusion. The Soviets' only advantage would be in waging a limited nuclear war, which they can only engage in with our cooperation; the safeguard of MAD can be undermined only if we ourselves allow it to be, by abandoning it as our avowed policy. As long as we make it clear to the Russians that a nuclear attack, even a "limited" one, would instantly bring on massive retaliation, they will never dare attack. As mad as MAD is, it has prevented nuclear war for the past generation and remains our only sure safeguard against nuclear war until that day when all nuclear weapons can be eliminated.

The true danger lies not in the illusory Soviet "superiority" but in the willingness of the U.S. to adopt limited nuclear war (including a first-strike capability) as a policy. It is people like Mr. Jastrow who, in seeking to make nuclear war "thinkable" and "winnable," bring us that much closer to its happening.

LAWRENCE AUSTER
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Robert Jastrow bases his case for strategic superiority on the belief that deterrence, which involves a devastating American counterattack, is essentially flawed. He is wrong. Nuclear weapons have no military value beyond deterrence. Strategic superiority is impossible for three reasons. There is no way to defend either our military forces or civilian population against a nuclear attack. We do not have weapons with sufficient reliability and accuracy to eliminate all the missiles of the Soviet Union. Finally, we do not have the command, control, and communication capability to fight a prolonged nuclear war. These factors also prevent the Soviet Union from obtaining strategic superiority.

Like it or not, we must accept the fact that the only purpose nuclear weapons serve is as a deterrent. The best deterrent is a nuclear weapon that can survive an attack and have the capability to respond. The submarine armed with ballistic missiles fills this need. These missiles now have the accuracy to attack targets that are valued by the Soviet leadership. They do not have to be fired indiscriminately on Soviet cities. This adds to the credibility of our deterrence doctrine. At the same time, the submarine-launched missile is not a first-strike threat since it would be virtually impossible to coordinate a sustained counterforce attack using only submarines.

A search for strategic superiority is a dangerous undertaking. It will lead to an ever-escalating and destabilizing arms race. It is a goal that can never be reached. Yet once we begin to believe that nuclear weapons have military value, the chance that they will be used in a crisis increases.

W. E. CORNELIUS
St. Louis, Missouri

ROBERT JASTROW writes:

The main current of criticism running through these interesting letters is that a Soviet nuclear attack on American ICBM's and military strong points would be almost certain to trigger a devastating American counterattack against Russian cities, with massive loss of life. In the opinion of the correspondents, this is sufficient to deter the Russians from a first strike. (The American attack would have to be directed against Russian cities because our submarine missiles, which would carry the attack to the enemy, are not sufficiently accurate to destroy hardened military targets.)

This is the premise on which American strategy has been based for many years. The trouble with it is that the Russians have now built up their strategic forces to such an extraordinary level of destructive power that if we should counterattack after a Russian first strike, as the American theory of deterrence envisions, it would be in the certain knowledge that the Soviet Union could direct against us a third strike so devastating that America would never rise from the ashes. Faced with this prospect, the American government might well be deterred from using our deterrent.

The correspondents seem to be saying that this doesn't matter. In order to deter the Russians, we only need the *capability* for carrying out a retaliatory counterattack; we only need to *threaten* reprisal. But Soviet strategic superiority makes that threat far less credible than it was, say, ten years ago. Because of the huge stockpile of missiles and bombs in the Soviet nuclear arsenal, the Russians can initiate a powerful attack on our military installations and still have enough bombs in reserve to reduce the United States to charred rubble if we attempt to strike back. It seems clear to me that this circumstance diminishes the value of our strategic deterrent. If the Soviet Union can destroy a sufficient fraction of our nuclear arsenal in its initial attack, or limit the effectiveness of the arsenal by destroying the military-command links to our bombers and missile submarines, the value of the American nuclear deterrent will disappear entirely.

So now a series of quantitative questions arises for the Soviet military planners. How many B-52's can they catch on the ground? How many American missiles in their silos? How many submarines in port? How many B-52's and cruise missiles can be shot down in flight? How many submarines at sea tracked and destroyed? And how successfully can communication links be broken between submarine commanders and the President or his surrogate?

Military communication links are the Achilles heel in our strategic deterrent, as William E. Hewitt points out. Communication links with submarines are a particular problem, as the recent report of the Scowcroft Commission notes. Submerged submarines are hard to contact by radio because radio wavelengths now in use do not penetrate sea water. Moreover, all military communications—land, sea, and air—are vulnerable to EMP, the Electromagnetic Pulse. EMP is a destructive surge of voltage across the entire North American continent, which the Soviets can generate by exploding an H-bomb high above the United States. The new silicon circuit chips, which pack hundreds of thousands of electronic components into a tiny space, are particularly vulnerable to EMP. One large Soviet H-bomb, exploded above the atmosphere at the start of a Soviet surprise attack, could blind all our early-warning satellites and radars. EMP could also erase the memories of computers, burn out radio receivers, and damage telephone lines across the country. Our military communications

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satellites, which relay messages to U.S. bombers and submarines, could also be knocked out.

With military communications disrupted, the commanders of our missile submarines would be on their own. Would a submarine commander, cruising underseas, be willing to take responsibility for starting World War III, merely on the suspicion that something is amiss up there? How confident can we be that our submarines will remain the ultimate deterrent, in the light of these circumstances?

There are other problems with the submarine deterrent. The Scowcroft Report observes that our submarine force, "consisting solely of a few very large submarines, each carrying on the order of 200 nuclear bombs, presents a small number of valuable targets to the Soviets." This circumstance is an inducement to the Soviet Union to pour enormous resources into research on anti-submarine warfare. Although submerged submarines are the least vulnerable element in our strategic triad today, they may not remain so much longer. The Scowcroft Report concludes: "Over the long run it would be unwise to rely so heavily on submarines as our only ballistic-missile force."

The survivability of our ICBM's is also decreasing steadily, because of the deployment of hundreds of monster Soviet SS-18's, each twice the size of an MX. These SS-18's are accurate as well as destructive; contrary to the suggestion in James H. Carlisle's letter, their accuracy is roughly a tenth of a nautical mile, or 600 feet, comparable to the accuracy of American missiles. As a result, only 15 percent of our Minuteman ICBM's can survive a Soviet attack today, and that number will decline to 7 percent in 1985 and 3 percent in 1988. The Scowcroft Report confirms this weakness also; it states that the Soviets "probably possess the necessary combination of ICBM numbers, reliability, accuracy, and warhead yield to destroy almost all of the 1,047 U.S. ICBM silos, using only a portion of their own ICBM force. The U.S. ICBM force now deployed cannot inflict similar damage." Joseph Forbes finds these facts "implausible," but they must be reckoned with.

At the same time the USSR has invested, and continues to invest, enormous sums in all elements of defense—civil, air, and ballistic-missile. Mr. Forbes says that Russians regard their government's civil-defense program as a "joke," but the USSR is spending $3-billion a year on civil defense and employs 150,000 Soviet workers full-time in the effort. The U.S. has essentially no air defense, but Soviet air defenses are gargantuan in magnitude—7,000 radars, 12,000 surface-to-air missiles, and 3,000 fighter interceptors. A Department of Defense report states that within a few years our aging B-52's will be unable to penetrate the heavy Soviet air defenses. Our cruise missiles are supposed to bridge the gap until the B-1's and Stealth bombers are ready, but penetration of Soviet air space by these slow-moving, subsonic, pilotless craft is an uncertain matter at best.

The Soviet Union is also active in ballistic-missile defense. Our reconnaissance satellites have discovered five mammoth phased-array radars under construction in the USSR, suitable for tracking incoming nuclear warheads and targeting them for interception by anti-ballistic missiles. These radars take years to construct and are the long-lead-time items in an ABM system. The USSR has also tested its interceptor missiles—SAM 5's and SAM 10's—in ABM modes at altitudes above 100,000 feet. The Soviets appear to be moving toward deployment of a large ABM defense.

On top of all these developments, the Soviets continue to build up their nuclear arsenal. Soviet destructive power is augmented each year by 5 new nuclear-missile submarines, 175 ICBM's, and 100 SS-20's. The Soviet margin of destructive power, now at least twice ours, is going up steadily. The USSR has also been investing heavily in the hardening of its silos and command-and-control centers. All late-model Soviet ICBM's are now protected by the world's hardest silos against the American counterattack that we envision as the backbone of our deterrence.

The trends are well-defined and the outcome is clear. If not next year, then in the year after, and if not in that year, then by 1986, we will perceive our capability for inflicting damage on the Soviets to be so diminished, and their capability for inflicting damage on us to be so enhanced, that a nuclear war would be lost without a missile being fired.

TURNING to specific points of fact, Mr. Forbes is correct in saying that a missile accuracy of, say, 1,000 feet means that half the missiles in a salvo will land within a circle of that radius, and half will land outside the circle. However, the half that land outside the circle will still be clustered in the neighborhood of the aiming point; very few will miss their target by more than two or three times the stated accuracy, i.e., a fraction of a mile. In the case above, 99.9 percent would fall within a mile of their target. Thus, it is not correct to conclude, as Mr. Forbes does, that "Soviet warheads would be falling all over our country" during an attack on our military strong points. With the accuracy Soviet missiles are now achieving—and, according to the Scowcroft Report, accuracies as good as a few hundred feet are now in prospect with the aid of terminal guidance—it will soon be possible for the Soviet Union to execute a surgically clean strike, with relatively few civilian casualties, against key military installations in the United States.

Robert DeBare states that available data "clearly show that the Soviets do not have a first-strike capability," but the Scowcroft Report confirms earlier judgments that the Soviets do have a first-strike capability, as I noted above.

Mr. Forbes suggests that our ICBM's would not be vulnerable to a Soviet first strike because we would follow the policy either of launch-on-warning or launch-on-attack, and thus the Soviet warheads would only fall on empty silos. It seems to me that the discussion of strategies of launch-on-warning or launch-on-attack is academic because the Soviet Union will never contemplate a nuclear strike until it possesses the certain means of blinding our early-warning satellites and radars by EMP or other methods.

Vivian Benton-Rubel says that, according to her sources, our Trident submarines know "precisely where they are at all times." "Precisely" is a relative term; in the case of the Tridents, it means within about 500 yards, which is pinpoint accuracy in the vast expanse of the ocean, but not good enough to destroy a hardened silo.

Thomas Powers, Robert DeBare, and William E. Hewitt ask why I did not take account of Carter's Presidential Directive 59 of July 25, 1980 and other recent policy changes that indicate we are now more interested in targeting Russian mili-

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tary installations than in killing the Russian civilian population. The trouble is that we cannot implement PD-59 because we are stuck with a strategic arsenal dominated by submarine missiles—an arsenal that reflects the thinking of the years of Mutual Assured Destruction, and is therefore good for little else than killing civilians. Our most accurate missile, the Minuteman III, although accurate, is, according to the Scowcroft Report, "inadequate to put at serious risk more than a small share of the many hardened [i.e., military] targets in the Soviet Union." Initiatives taken in the Reagan administration will create a strategic arsenal that can back up PD-59, but not before the end of this decade.

Ralph Roskies asks how American nuclear superiority would help repel a conventional attack by the Soviet Union. It seems to me the answer is that when we possessed nuclear superiority, its threatened use effectively deterred Soviet action in Berlin, in Cuba, and in the 1973 Yom Kippur war. By 1978, when we had lost that superiority, the Russians were able to act with impunity in Afghanistan, and, as Richard DeLauer, Pentagon chief scientist, said, "What the hell was the best thing we could do? We withdrew from their goddamn Olympics."

Gandhi

To the Editor of Commentary:

Three cheers for Richard Grenier ["The Gandhi Nobody Knows," March]. I always wish his articles were longer. The late Dwight Macdonald was right when he said that Mr. Grenier is "our best practicing movie critic/historian" [Letters from Readers, August 1981]. . . .

I expect Mr. Grenier will find the response to his article heated—charges of racism, cultural imperialism, and character assassination, if not of having personally introduced cobras to the subcontinent. A pity, since the essential point, as I read it, was not that Gandhi was an offensive villain, but simply that he was . . . someone whose character and ideas—and influence—grew out of a specific culture and historical situation, and who cannot, honestly, be isolated from them. Or, more generally, that he deserved the dignity of being dealt with as an individual, not as an empty human shell into which the film-maker Richard Attenborough could pour an expedient, contextless, prettied-up idealism. . . .

Christopher Dunn

Potsdam, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

I did not see the movie *Gandhi*, nor do I intend to. As a recent emigrant from the Soviet Union, I do not actually have to see propaganda to know it. Reviews are quite enough. However, I did have to listen to my liberal American friends raving about the movie, the man, and, most importantly, the "lesson"—the applicability of Gandhi's teaching to real life. I then reminded my friends of Gandhi's notorious letter to Martin Buber in which, as Mr. Grenier points out, Gandhi preached that German Jews had the moral obligation to stay in Germany and, by willingly submitting to Nazi atrocities, teach mankind a moral lesson. The amazing thing is the answer I received: "Well, it might have worked." What has happened to American liberals? How and when did they lose any semblance of moral discernment so that they can no longer distinguish between democratic Britain and Nazi Germany (or, for that matter, between the United States and the Soviet Union)?

If anything, Gandhi's record of passive resistance and civil disobedience should serve as a glorious monument to Western civilization at its best—because it worked. How can anyone ignore the fact that it could only have worked because Gandhi was dealing with a decent and moral society?

I know the Russians are going to like this movie—if they are smart they will be showing it all over Afghanistan in no time.

Lena Mandel

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

After reading "The Gandhi Nobody Knows" I was reduced to the kind of admiration that is usually reserved for the high points of dazzling scholarship. Richard Grenier's research, his marshaling of data, his general writing skill all make me wonder what peaks he can leap to next. . . . The article on *Gandhi* is even more fun than his leveling of *Reds* ["Bolshevism for the 80's," March 1982] and *Missing* ["The Curious Career of Costa-Gavras," April 1982]. . . .

Roy Traband

Amarillo, Texas

To the Editor of Commentary:

I admire Richard Grenier for being so knowledgeable, but I admire him even more for his talent in thoroughly documenting the historical background and thus exposing a completely unhistorical film. For saying "J'Accuse" to all distortions, he certainly merits an Oscar.

Johanna B. Angel

New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Richard Grenier's article on *Gandhi* is illuminating, elucidating, brilliant. Not only does he tell us about the movie, but about the man, and, indeed, the entire culture and religion that the movie purports to represent. . . .

Robert Carlen

Stony Brook, New York

To the Editor of Commentary:

Richard Grenier undertook the much-needed job of debunking Gandhi. I applaud his effort. At the same time, some small points need to be corrected and I would like to add something to strengthen his argument.

When Gandhi supported the Khilafat movement of the Indian Muslims after World War I, he opposed the creation of new states for the subject peoples of the Ottoman empire, which had been envisioned by the treaty of Sèvres (1920). One of the new states called for by the victors in World War I was an Armenian state to be set up in eastern Anatolia in part of historic Armenia. The Armenians had just suffered the first modern genocide at the hands of the Turks. The massacre continued after the end of World War I in areas which France and the Russian Bolsheviks handed over to the new Muslim Turkish government of Ataturk, as well as in Smyrna, conquered from Greece.

By his support of the Khilafat movement, Gandhi was disregarding the national rights of the Ottoman subject peoples and especially those of the Armenians. He was saying in effect that mass murder did not bother him. Genocide, he implied, was OK. Let me add that the Armenian massacres were not an obscure event. In fact, they received worldwide attention. Surely Gandhi was aware of them from the British papers. These facts strengthen Mr. Grenier's argument.

Where Mr. Grenier is mistaken, I believe, is in attributing to the Arabs in general the desire to sepa-

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rate from the Ottoman empire—and from the Caliph or Ottoman Sultan. In his well-researched work, *The Emergence of the Middle East*, Howard Sachar makes the point that the Arab Muslims supported the Ottoman empire during World War I and focused their loyalty on the Caliph as the titular leader of Islam, as did the Indian Muslims. Elie Kedourie has also made the same point. . . .

ELLIOTT GREEN
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I do not feel competent to comment on Richard Grenier's dissection of the movie *Gandhi*. I was only sorry when his excellently written analysis ended. However, my own reaction after leaving the movie theater was quite different. I was thinking, what if the Palestinians were to take up *ahimsa* (nonviolence)? Mr. Grenier writes that "Britain . . . was a moral nation and nonviolent civil disobedience was plainly the best and most effective way of achieving Indian independence." Would not the same apply to the Palestinians and Israel?

What if the PLO worldwide and the Palestinians on the West Bank and in Gaza would stop violence and switch to *ahimsa*? Are the Israelis capable of an Amritsar? I believe not, but if such a massacre were somehow to occur, it would stir up a nationwide revolt in Israel.

WALTER A. SHELDON
Scarsdale, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

If the intention of Richard Grenier's caustic attack on the film *Gandhi* was to replace one caricature with another, his success has been supreme. Insofar as the article gives some credit to the British Raj, it is appreciated; but by tipping into caricature of its own, it is as incorrect as the film itself and *far* more harmful.

Richard Attenborough concentrated on the saintly in the presentation of an image and an ideal to which the best in the tradition of India would aspire. Mr. Grenier portrays that vivid and varied, vast, poor, and struggling nation without a touch of the affection or understanding which it so richly deserves.

Selectivity in the choice of fact may produce a theatrical hyperbole in which the overall truth transcends selective inaccuracy. Conversely, a selection of inaccuracies and their presentation in a brilliant diatribe can create an overall untruth of its own.

We Jews often and rightly complain of potted denunciations of all that is Israel, by reference to interconnected themes which illuminate only the darkest sides of the life of that nation. Mr. Grenier should not extend the same imbalance to his view of India.

Om, shanti, shanti, shanti—the Hindu dream of eternal peace—deserves a better and a fairer interpretation than Mr. Grenier sees fit to give it. Gandhi's Jewish supporters in his South African days and thereafter would have been ashamed—as I am.

GREVILLE JANNER, MP
President, Commonwealth
Jewish Council
London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier has exploded the myth of Mahatma Gandhi and the integrity of the film which won eight Academy Awards. While I appreciate the research (and intuition) Mr. Grenier used to devastate Gandhi's reputation and to reveal the falsification of history and fact by the film's director, Richard Attenborough, I nevertheless sense ideological overkill. . . .

Mohandas K. Gandhi obviously was a man of extreme contradictions, a man whose fierce sense of control and asceticism unnaturally forced life to obey impulses which are virtually irrelevant, even dangerous, to the political, not to say metaphysical, demands of contemporary reality. However, Mr. Grenier's article implies that there has been a great conspiracy at work here, that millions of Indians and Westerners have been grossly deceived, that their veneration is totally misplaced, that this so-called saint was perhaps the worst hypocrite who ever lived.

While I sense the unconscious (as well as conscious) need of the liberal temperament to romanticize the concept of *satyagraha* (noncooperation) and attach Gandhi's mission to the simplistic notions of peace espoused by the anti-nuclear movement, I nevertheless caution Mr. Grenier about his cruelly truthful portrait of this man and the movie made to glorify him. . . .

Mahatma Gandhi showed enough courage and vision to make himself a heroic figure in his time; instinctively one senses that however misleading the film is, Gandhi himself was not the ignoble character that is the picture we have of him in Mr. Grenier's article. It is unfortunate that millions of filmgoers might find this film relevant to the terrible political problems and challenges inherent in the struggle of East versus West. However, Mr. Grenier's article is more likely to intensify the loyalties of critics toward the film and toward Gandhi. . . .

Gandhi may have been a stilted, even twisted human being, but his idealism pushed itself into a willingness to give himself over utterly to a notion of God and truth that, at least symbolically, expresses some yearning within the human soul for perfection. . . .

Mr. Grenier's contempt for Hinduism—whatever may be its mythological idiocies—shows much more ignorance of the imaginative forces which work to order man's perception of this universe than it shows the absurdity of anyone seriously considering that religion as "truth." No, Richard Grenier went into overdrive, almost demoniacally under a compulsion to destroy Gandhi, Hinduism, and whatever innocent satisfaction someone could gain from watching this very flawed film. . . .

ROBIN WOODSWORTH CARLSEN
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier's "The Gandhi Nobody Knows" attacks the film *Gandhi* by telling us that what we see on the screen is a sanitized, sentimentalized Gandhi. Mr. Grenier's Gandhi is a lecher, racist, hypocrite, fool, and faddist who wrote ". . . less about home rule than he did about enemas, and excrement. . . ." The distinguished film director, Richard Attenborough, is depicted as a paid political propagandist for the government of India. "The film," according to Mr. Grenier, "grotesquely distorts both Gandhi's life and character to the point that it is nothing more than a pious fraud, and a fraud of the most egregious kind." Mr. Grenier constructs his argument by telling us about scenes that should have been but were not included in the movie and by alleging that scenes that *were* in the film were not: ". . . [A]nother scene I would like to have seen in the movie: Gandhi starving himself to death to block affirmative action for Untouchables" and ". . . our movie shows none of this [communal riots and killing at the time of partition] on

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camera . . . the oldest way of stacking the deck in Hollywood."

Let us take the "missing" affirmative-action scene. Mr. Grenier concludes that because Gandhi opposed separate electorates (i.e., Untouchables voting separately for Untouchable candidates) he opposed affirmative action for Untouchables. Not so. The "Poona Pact" (1932) that brought his fast to an end provided that legislative seats in proportion to their population be reserved for Untouchables, a policy model that was extended after independence to government jobs and university places and scholarships.

What Gandhi did oppose was separate electorates, a deeply divisive force in Indian politics. In 1908, separate electorates were created for Muslims; Muslim voters voting only for Muslim candidates became the germ of Muslim separatism that led to partition. Gandhi opposed separate electorates for Untouchables because he was a nationalist. He wanted social transformation too. Untouchability was wrong, a false Hindu practice that he spent most of his life trying to eradicate by word and action. Contrary to Mr. Grenier's assertion that Gandhi left no legacy to independent India, his campaign against untouchability is reflected in constitutional provisions, legislation, and affirmative-action policies. His legacy can be found abroad too in the political ideas and practices of Martin Luther King and South Africa's African National Congress and in the economic ideas of E.F. Schumacher's *Small Is Beautiful.*

Mr. Grenier's allegation that scenes of communal rioting and bloodshed were kept off camera is used to play down the impact of one of the movie's most dramatic scenes, the Amritsar massacre of 1919. ". . . [S]hot in elaborate and loving detail . . . ," it shows soldiers under the command of General Dyer shooting down unarmed Indians in an enclosed garden. Why get so excited about 379 dead, Mr. Grenier asks, when "Indians gave themselves over to an orgy of bloodletting" as soon as the British were gone? He sees no distinction between General Dyer's official violence and the communal violence that nobody wanted, a distinction that marks the difference between tyranny and tragedy.

According to Mr. Grenier, why Gandhi ceased to be an imperial loyalist is a mystery. "I have studied the literature," Mr. Grenier writes, "and cannot find . . ." a point of " 'agonizing reappraisal' " when Gandhi's most fundamental beliefs were reexamined. Gandhi, he speculates, became a nationalist out of "unrequited love" of Englishmen and their ways and out of "holy opportunism." There are other ways of reading the evidence. The massacre at Amritsar (together with the anti-sedition Rowlatt Bill that preceded it and the Khilafat issue that followed it) provided that point of agonizing reappraisal. Gandhi did indeed admire the British. When Gandhi appealed to Britain's commitment to a government of laws against its denial of rights and repression, he expressed what he learned and admired about Britain's best self. When he rebelled, it was because Englishmen had gone against their own principles. What was unrequited was Gandhi's ethical commitment to nonviolent conflict resolution. It provided a way to search for common ground rather than victory. Winning in adversary proceedings or in war produced losers and victims rather than communities of shared values and interests.

Mr. Grenier would like to have it both ways, Gandhi the failed and rejected Englishman and Gandhi the Hindu opportunist. Gandhi in fact was both and more. His ethics of right means and brotherhood drew on aspects of Christianity, Thoreau, Ruskin, and Tolstoy as well as Hindu epics and sacred texts. Gandhi's greatness lay in being at once a man of and for his time and a teacher whose words and acts resonated across national and historical boundaries. His achievement was not national independence for India—it would have happened without him—but helping Indians to find self-esteem, courage, and a public philosophy.

Mr. Grenier would have us believe this is all nonsense. In fact, according to Mr. Grenier, Gandhi was a racist. In South Africa Gandhi ". . . had no concern for blacks whatever. In fact . . . he volunteered to organize a brigade of Indians to put down a Zulu rising . . ." and was rewarded with a medal. . . .

In fact, Gandhi's struggles between 1896 and 1914 in South Africa against repressive measures directed against Asians established the agenda, organizational forms, and tactics for the African National Congress, formed at Bloemfontein in 1912 to protect the interests of the colored peoples in South Africa. Gandhi was regarded as a founding father whose heroism made him a mythic figure. According to Lord Hailey, "There can be little doubt that the movement which has associated Asians as protagonists in the cause of Africans" originated with Gandhi and continues to this day to be encouraged from India whose leaders possess "an almost missionary zeal for the 'liberation' of colored races." It is true that Gandhi raised a volunteer brigade during the Zulu war but, like the brigade he raised during World War I, it was an ambulance corps to care for the wounded and sick. He meant to nurture, not kill, while being loyal to an empire whose laws he hoped to change.

Mr. Grenier also tells us about his nonpolitical failures, about hysterical young girls who fought "for the honor of sleeping naked with the Mahatma and cuddling the nude septuagenarian in their arms." Mr. Grenier seems to be obsessed with salacious versions of historical events of which he has no knowledge. They coincide with the frightful period between 1946 and 1948 when, in the midst of the partition bloodshed, Gandhi at seventy-seven brought something like peace to Bengal by becoming what Lord Mountbatten, the Viceroy, called a "One-Man Boundary Force." Weeks of trekking through Noakhali in the midst of Hindu-Muslim bloodshed deeply shook his equanimity. Gandhi believed that his capacity to control the external environment was related to his capacity to control himself. At other times under trying circumstances, Gandhi imposed penances and fasts on himself. This time something more was needed. He warned his friends and followers that he was thinking of a bold experiment, "whose heat will be great."

He asked Manu Gandhi, his nineteen-year-old grandniece, to share his bed. "Manu Gandhi, my grandniece, shares the bed with me, strictly as my very blood . . . as part of what might be my last *Yajna* [sacrifice]," he wrote to a colleague. Gandhi's bedroom, then as always, was public; others passed through and could look in. He discussed what he was doing in daily prayer meetings, attended by hundreds. That no nudity was involved we know from accounts by members and visitors to the Ashram who report seeing Gandhi and Manu peacefully asleep.

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What Gandhi did as an old man under great strain was an extreme version of a culturally sanctioned form of asceticism. It created a scandal among many followers. When they complained that gossip about this practice would harm his work, he was heard to say, "The courage which made a man risk public disapproval when he felt he was right was undoubtedly of a superior order." . . .

Mr. Grenier is repelled by the idea of nonviolent resistance and finds naive the notion, so central to Gandhi's method of conflict resolution, of appealing to an adversary's best instincts. If Gandhi knew that hatred begets hatred and violence begets violence, he also knew that the use of nonviolent resistance was as difficult as it was rare. Gandhi recommended nonviolent resistance to Jews, Czechs, and Poles just as he did to his fellow Indians. For him it was the best, not the only, way. "If only the Jews of Germany had the good sense," Mr. Grenier mockingly writes, "to offer their throats willingly to the Nazi butcher knives . . . they would arouse world opinion." Mr. Grenier misses what the film in several scenes conveys with great power, that nonviolent resistance *is* resistance, that it requires a higher form of courage, that it is not passive as in the phrase "offer their throats," that it provides an active way to resist injustice and oppression without hatred and killing.

LLOYD I. RUDOLPH
SUSANNE HOEBER RUDOLPH
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier's article on *Gandhi* is both a valuable supplement to and an effective antidote against this motion picture. It expanded both my knowledge and my appreciation of Gandhi's eccentricities. However, neither the facts about Gandhi's peculiar personal life nor the quality of Candice Bergen's acting justify making Miss Bergen the object of a scatological joke. . . .

GARTH PETERSON
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Skepticism about mass-media sermons directed at our moral conversion is surely a healthy attitude. . . . But perhaps Richard Grenier goes a trifle too far. . . . Not satisfied with trashing the film and the director, he also trashes the man, pacifism, the Hindu religion, and the people and government of India. It seems to me that the last of these deserves our criticism (as it surely does) in part because it has abandoned the ideals of its founder. . . .

HENRY S. LIMOUZE
Wright State University
Dayton, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Richard Grenier's "The Gandhi Nobody Knows," I felt that Mahatma Gandhi had been assassinated for a second time.

JAYANT GANDHI (no relation)
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Masquerading as an expert on Gandhi, India, and Hinduism, Richard Grenier delivers a crudely woven web of half-truths, misrepresentations, and downright lies. . . .

Mr. Grenier accuses Gandhi of supporting Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, leader of the Free India Army. What a blatant lie! It is a recorded fact that Gandhi (successfully) fought to expel his former colleague from the Indian National Congress when Bose turned to military methods to achieve independence. Many Indians blame Bose's failure to overcome the British on Gandhi's noncooperation. Mr. Grenier alleges that as independence approached, "Gandhi began endorsing violence left, right, and center." Lord Mountbatten, who should know, stated that the old man singlehandedly stopped sectarian strife in Calcutta and eastern India during the days of the subcontinent's partition, a feat that entire divisions of the Raj's army could not accomplish in the Punjab. However, as a political leader, Gandhi is fair game. All politicians, even dead ones, must put up with writers of Mr. Grenier's ilk. So must nations.

Mr. Grenier's aspersions on Gandhi and India, through contrived facts, do not trouble us as much as do his venomous outpourings against Hinduism. Mr. Grenier would like his readers to believe that we Hindus grew up munching on cow dung and sipping urine. Every faith has adherents who belong to its outer fringe. Mr. Grenier presents a crass account of such fringe elements to portray Hindu culture and the religion. He insults the faith of over half-a-billion peo-

"FRANÇOIS MITTERAND n'est pas . . . comment dites on 'chutzpah-impaired' *en français*? On the eve of Williamsburg, he joined Olof Palme, Andreas Papandreou, and four other socialist honchos in calling on the United States to get its economic house in order. The American wit William Safire comments: 'After years of blaming his recession on our recession, he is now blaming his recession on our recovery.' A French translation should be forwarded to President Mitterand. *N'est-ce pas?"*

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ple—over a million of whom live in the Western hemisphere. His warped grasp of Hinduism is reminiscent of Adolf Hitler's musings on Judaism. It does not occur to him that the Hindu majority in India never perpetrated pogroms, expulsions, and persecutions on its minorities—Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Muslims, and Jews. This is an enviable record stretching from the dawn of human civilization.

Mr. Grenier's Hindu culture has the "caste" system as a basic tenet. This is as blasphemous as claiming that since slavery and the rise of the Protestant faith coincided historically, slavery is central to Western Christianity. . . .

In an unabashed trumpeting of colonialism, Mr. Grenier credits the British with giving Indians a sense of nation and democracy. Has he never heard of the Maurya dynasty which ruled the subcontinent (and beyond) as a single entity before there was a Roman empire? Writings of ancient Indian scholars all across the land are full of references to *Bharat Mata*—the Indian nation. Mr. Grenier has apparently never heard of Vaishali, either. Democracy flourished in Vaishali for centuries contemporaneously with the Greek city states. . . .

KRISHNA P. SINGH
MARTHA J. SINGH

Cherry Hill, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Rather than attempt a detailed reply to Richard Grenier's disjointed attack, I wish to offer the following observations.

Mr. Grenier's view of Hinduism as "a religion whose ideas I find somewhat repugnant" is disgraceful. . . . His understanding of Hinduism is naive at best. His view of the Vedas smacks of cultural and philosophical chauvinism and does little to convey the essence of Hindu metaphysics. He seems concerned with contradictions in the Upanishads, the sutras, and other Hindu doctrines and yet demonstrates little awareness that the scriptures of all major religions contain numerous examples of such contradictions, particularly if no allowance is made for context, metaphor, and levels of meaning. Surely Mr. Grenier would not expect all the books of the Bible to reflect a single philosophical viewpoint.

Mr. Grenier's contention that Gandhi's use of the word *Rama* cannot be taken to mean God is both petty and an insult to our intelligence. Hindus have no more difficulty in identifying *Rama*, both as an incarnation of Vishnu and as Brahman (or God), than an American would have in understanding the similarities between the terms Jehovah and God. . . .

Undoubtedly, the caste system is a perversion of the original four-level division in early Hindu society and repugnant to humanistic ideals, but such perversions are not unique to Hinduism, as any survey of religions will reveal. Surely any society that has persisted as a recognizable and coherent entity for 3,500 years must have some merit. If Mr. Grenier is offended by the fact that India wars with Pakistan or does not always follow the golden rule in national or international affairs, he need only be reminded of the moral distortions in societies founded upon the Judeo-Christian heritage: the *Blitzkrieg*, the Holocaust, and nuclear warfare are not products of the Indian mind, whatever its deficiencies.

Finally, I would like to remind readers that it was Gandhi's very candor and ability to admit error which provided Mr. Grenier with the ammunition to conduct his character assassination. Few leaders have shared so freely their public and private thoughts and actions. I seriously doubt that any of us (Mr. Grenier included) would relish sharing all of our private thoughts, feelings, fantasies, and concerns with the public. . . .

STAN BLAZYK

Galveston, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Richard Grenier's article on *Gandhi* . . . is a deeply insulting piece of writing bent upon heaping ridicule not only on the maker of the movie, Richard Attenborough, but also on Gandhi and the entire civilization of India. . . .

Mr. Grenier seems to depend upon V.S. Naipaul as his chief interpreter of India. . . . Naipaul is rightly admired for his ability to evoke the atmosphere of remote places for the benefit of Western readers, and there is no doubt that he is one of the greatest writers in the English world today. . . . Unfortunately, in the West his writings have been used only to discredit the Third World . . . especially in those quarters which feel that the Third World should never have been decolonized—"Look how uncivilized these savages are. Even Naipaul, himself a member of that group, says so."

Mr. Grenier's complaint against Gandhi is that he was inconsistent, that he did not advocate absolute nonviolence, and that he was a bundle of contradictions. . . . The only thing Gandhi claimed was that he was a principled person. To the standard that he set for himself, he was truthful till he breathed his last. The precepts that he followed were not etched in stone and unchangeable. He evolved them as he went through life. He was not always a vegetarian; he ate meat regularly for almost a year, even after the sensation of the dead goat bleating in his belly. He lied about his food habits to his parents. He stole loose cash to play games. He lusted after his wife and pestered her with demands for sexual favors. But he himself records all of these intimate details in his work, and also tells us how and why he arrived at decisions to moderate and even give up some of his cravings. His whole life, Gandhi maintained, was an "experiment." . . .

Next there is Mr. Grenier's crude attempt to play down Richard Attenborough's credentials. By suggesting that he is devoid of talent in the high art of film-making, Mr. Grenier seems to imply that this film should not have received all the attention it did. Yet the fact that it received so many awards suggests that it had artistic appeal. Academy Awards, after all, are not given merely on the basis of sublimity of theme or the nobility of one character.

Speaking of motives, let me speculate on Mr. Grenier's. Why is he so exercised over this film? . . . A real clue, it seems to me, lies in Mr. Grenier's description of the reactions of Ralph Nader who reportedly saw the movie three times. Nader, according to Mr. Grenier, "conceived the extraordinary notion that Gandhi's symbolic flouting of the British salt tax was a 'consumer issue' which he later expanded into the wider one of Indian independence." . . . Could it be that it is this Nader-ite enthusiasm which provoked Mr. Grenier to sling mud at *Gandhi* the movie, Gandhi the man, and India the country that gave birth to him and that also provided him with the stage for the anti-imperialist drama that changed the world? Could it be that Mr. Grenier did not and does not like that change? . . .

If Mr. Grenier wants to save

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America from catching the "Gandhi bug" from Ralph Nader, that certainly is his privilege. But it does not call for twisting the historical nation and an entire civilization. As Gandhi himself steadfastly held: the end does not justify the means.

K.V. NAGARAJAN
Susquehanna University
Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . There is a general belief among some people that Gandhi was an apostle of truth, but the fact is that the film *Gandhi* is as far removed from truth as truth is from falsehood. It is a fake and fabricated portrayal of Gandhi. . . . What is the film trying to prove? That Gandhi was the liberator of India; this is a patent untruth. There were great Indian leaders before Gandhi and there were also leaders like Mohammed Ali Jinnah who was Gandhi's contemporary for more than two decades. All students of history know that Jinnah was already an important leader and at the peak of his popularity when Gandhi returned to India from South Africa. Gandhi was not even an important member of the Indian National Congress until the 1920's. Frantically in search of a political platform, Gandhi snatched the Home Rule League from Jinnah and succeeded in giving it a Hindu name and character. When Jinnah was head of the League, however, it was popular with all the people—Hindus, Muslims, Parsees, and the like. . . .

The film-makers have tried to make a romantic story out of Gandhi's anti-British civil-disobedience campaigns, but why didn't they have the courage to say that every time Gandhi started a civil-disobedience campaign he had to call a halt and repent? First it was in the early 1920's. . . . At that time, Jinnah bluntly told Gandhi, "Your way is the wrong way, mine is the right way, the constitutional way." History is a witness that Gandhi's campaign created bitterness and resentment among large sections of the people and proved utterly fruitless. Then in the late 20's, Gandhi again tried to revive his campaign and told the people that if they supported him victory would be just around the corner. . . .

In 1942 Gandhi tried his civil-disobedience movement for the third time. . . . This campaign also flopped . . . because it wasn't until 1947 when the British finally left India, exactly when it suited them to leave. Thus Gandhi's three campaigns had absolutely no effect or impact on the imperial timetable. In other words, Gandhi as a political agitator was a failure. . . .

Those who conceived the film should have known that Gandhi's portrait could not be complete without a portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah. Instead the film gives us a most atrocious caricature of Jinnah in order to improve the image of Gandhi. To say the least, it is a monstrous way of presenting India's freedom struggle. . . .

Gandhi and Jinnah reflected two attitudes, two philosophies, two ideologies. Gandhi developed a morbid dislike of every foreign product. His open condemnation of the Western way of life and of industrial advancement appeared to Jinnah an anachronism in the modern world. Gandhi and Jinnah were both men of high caliber (indeed it is an object of wonder that both belonged to the same Gujarati-speaking province of India) and both strove hard in their own way to end alien rule, but they possessed characteristically different qualities of leadership. . . .

It was easy to understand Gandhi at a distance: clad in a loin cloth, dwelling in a sweeper colony, and sleeping in an improvised bamboo hut, he seemed to symbolize the poverty and misery of India's teeming millions. But those who came to call on him and were privileged to have a dialogue with him were completely baffled by his mystical and metaphysical ways of dealing with mundane political issues. Nehru, Gandhi's pet apostle, found his mentor to be "a very difficult person to understand because sometimes his language was almost incomprehensible to an average modern." During his viceroyalty, Lord Wavell admitted that even after he had spoken to Gandhi for half an hour he was "still not sure what he meant to tell me. Every sentence he spoke could be interpreted in at least two different ways. I would be happier were I convinced that he knew what he was saying himself, but I cannot even be sure of that."

On the other hand, it was easy to misunderstand Jinnah at a distance: elegantly dressed . . . , living in a palatial house, he appeared to many to be an armchair separatist and a solitary man who shunned the masses. But all those who met him with an open mind and who talked to him intimately were almost instantly converted to his viewpoint and were happily surprised to discover that he was more than just a Muslim leader. . . . The interviewers did not have to labor to find the man behind the mask, since Jinnah never wore a mask; he always said what he meant and meant what he said.

It was in fact Jinnah who played the most decisive role during the last crucial years of the British Raj in India. . . . Gandhi's strategy had burst like a balloon; for all practical purposes he was not taken seriously. . . . It was Jinnah's consent to the mechanics of the transfer of power which led to freedom in August 1947. There is enough . . . evidence to show that if there had been no agreement on the partition plan, there would have been a prolonged civil war and India would have been split into more than two states.

Jinnah became a legend in his lifetime because his life story is, in fact, the biography of a nation. When I met Lord Mountbatten, the last British Viceroy of India, a few years before his death, he told me that even during his short tenure in office he became convinced that had there been no Jinnah, there would have been no Pakistan.

That Jinnah made history is not open to question, but what history has made of him is a question which needs to be studied because the founder of Pakistan has yet to be properly introduced to the world. . . .

With the film *Gandhi* the Indians have succeeded in planting a publicity atom bomb in every Pakistani home. The film creates the impression that Gandhi was the sole liberator of India and Jinnah was only a camp follower. But for millions of Pakistanis, Jinnah is the undisputed father of the nation and creator of the state. There are many people in Pakistan who are bitter about the film. But there is no point in reacting hysterically; rather than condemn the film, we should try to counter it by producing a better film on Jinnah. . . .

AZIZ BEG
Islamabad, Pakistan

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I see from your Letters section that your correspondents and contributors are, in general, persons well-equipped to argue about their particular subject. I am not. I am simply a German-Jewish refugee

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from Nazi oppression who found a home in India, a warm welcome there, and freedom. . . . I am not a historian, nor do I know enough of Hinduism to argue against Richard Grenier's greater wisdom. But, as a Jew, after years of being a noncitizen in Germany, I was given an unquestioned welcome by India. This welcome granted an outcast was and remains an unforgettable experience.

Mr. Grenier has every right to criticize the film *Gandhi* and, if he so wishes, Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy. But he has no right whatsoever to criticize the man Gandhi or his country. . . .

To make a mockery of Mahatma Gandhi's dream of nonviolence may sound clever. Of course violence erupted when the country was arbitrarily divided into India and Pakistan. . . . India is a country made up of human beings, with all the faults that all of us suffer from —no better, no worse. . . .

I cannot judge whether Mahatma Gandhi's preaching of nonviolence was responsible for the following historical fact, but fact it is. British officials left India after the Declaration of Independence in August 1947, but many, many English families in the business community remained. Yet there was not one single incident, in a country numbering about 325 million people, where an Englishman was molested or harmed. I was there and can testify to that. . . .

Just one last word about the India that gave me a home for eighteen long years. I arrived in India with a deep-seated inferiority complex because I was a Jew. You have to be a refugee to understand this; I had been well-taught in Hitler's Germany. And all of a sudden, I found myself in a country where the very word anti-Semitism was unknown. A haven and a heaven alike. I wonder if my experience of India and its people, the experience of one unknown and unimportant Jewish refugee, might induce second thoughts in Mr. Grenier. As a Jew, one who is deeply grateful to the country that permitted me to belong, I found your learned article, Mr. Grenier, an incredibly painful experience. Hence, this letter.

EDITH LEWINSKY-MUKERJEE
Brussels, Belgium

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Richard Grenier gives us a supposedly true picture of Gandhi that a historian cannot recognize. It is not my purpose to refute the innuendoes and suggestions, nor to support the repeated assertion that Gandhi was a "holy man." Rather, it is to state the truth.

First error of fact: "He was not to have any serious misgivings about the fundamentals of the caste system for about another thirty years" after 1893. Yet only three years later, on July 9, 1896, in Bombay, Gandhi led the inspection of the Untouchables' quarter when others refused. Five years later, in 1898, he had his famous quarrel with his wife about their carrying out the chamber pots of an Untouchable boarder, a scene shown in the movie. Seven years later, in November 1901, he set the notable example of taking on the work of Untouchables in cleaning toilets at the Indian National Congress in Calcutta. . . .

Second error: Gandhi "had no concern for blacks whatever." Gandhi was decorated in the Zulu war for service which included saving the lives not only of whites, but of blacks on both sides, including enemy blacks whom he carried many miles over desert terrain to medical help. By 1906 he had already recognized the awakening of blacks in South Africa and supported their education (*Indian Opinion*, March 1906). That he did not undertake a campaign for black liberation is unquestioned, but he became a model for great African leaders like Nobel Peace Laureate Luthuli, Nkrumah, Nyerere, and Kaunda....

Third error: "He was, furthermore, in the highest degree reactionary, permitting India no change in the relationship between the feudal lord and his peasants or servants, rich or poor." Gandhi's first *satyagraha* campaign in India was a successful protest against the mistreatment of poor railway passengers (November 12, 1915). Was the Ahmedabad mill strike of 1918 not for poor laborers? What was the Kheda tax protest in 1918 but for peasants' rights? And what of the Champaran campaign for land reform which the movie shows? . . .

Fourth error: He did not have "the slightest sympathy with other colonial peoples . . . he was totally unconcerned with other Asians and Africans." One should read his stirring speeches to the Inter-Asian Relations Conference at Delhi on April 1 and 2, 1947, the forerunner to the nonaligned conferences. Gandhi's interest in colonial struggles goes back farther than most statesmen. Sample, for instance, the columns of *Indian Opinion* for 1906 in which he admires the "Chinese awakening" (May 26), assesses the impact of the Japanese victory over Russia, sympathizes with the Arab awakening, and criticizes the extravagance of the Shah of Persia (August 25).

Fifth error: in his rush to show that Gandhi came to his absolute pacifism late in life, Mr. Grenier leaves the impression that the young Gandhi was "not ill-disposed to war at all," that he fought in three wars and at one time "led his Indian volunteers into the thick of battle." The historical record shows that in each instance—the Zulu war, the Boer war, and World War I—Gandhi was an unarmed noncombatant who refused to kill a fellow human, and deplored the violence and suffering caused by war. . . .

Sixth error: That when the British "finally withdrew, blood-maddened mobs surged through the streets . . . one of the most hideous periods of carnage in modern history." Such riots occurred not only following British withdrawal, but throughout British rule. Who then was responsible for such atrocities, the guilty Hindus and Muslims alone, or also those who brought "law and order" to India? Mr. Grenier claims: "Our movie shows none of this on camera." I wonder where he was during the horrible scenes of Calcutta in the film. To state that *ahimsa* "had virtually no effect whatever when Gandhi tried to bring it into play against violent Indians" suggests that the reviewer was absent when the moving scene of the "Miracle of Calcutta" was shown. Gandhi more than anyone else stemmed the communal hatred rather than calling "for seas of innocent blood" as alleged.

Seventh error: Gandhi is twice accused of advising the Jews to commit "collective suicide." Gandhi repeatedly recommended courageous *resistance* to Hitler, saying: "I am convinced that if someone with courage and vision can arise among them [the Jews] to lead them to nonviolent action . . . in truly religious resistance offered against the godless fury of dehumanized man . . ." (*Harijan*, November 26, 1938). Again, Gandhi did not counsel "collective suicide" for the Czechs. Condemning the shameful surrender of Munich as "a triumph of violence" he urged resistance and "the practice of nonvio-

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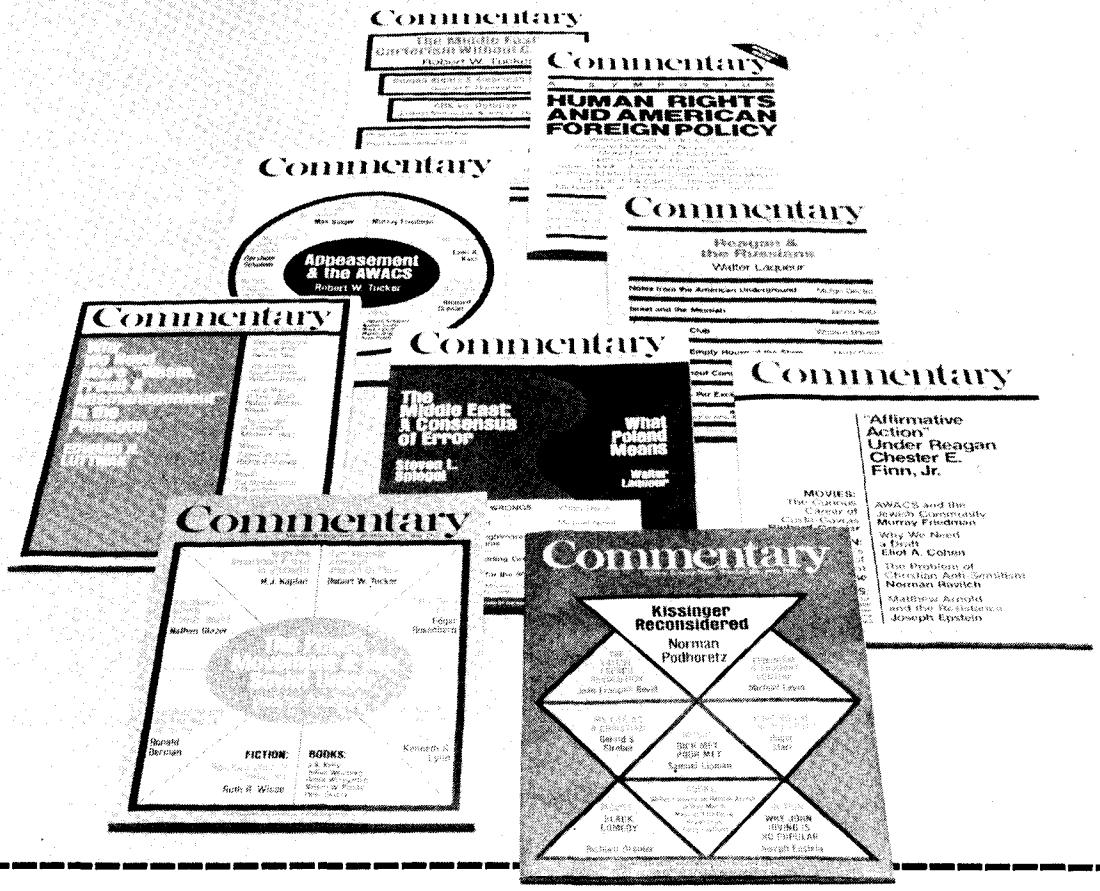

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lence even unto death" (*Harijan*, October 8, 1938). Similarly, he told the British: "I want you to fight Nazism without arms . . . with nonviolent arms" rather than aping Nazi methods of terror and violence which he called "out-Hitlering Hitler." . . .

Eighth: That "Gandhi did not worship the one God. He did not worship the God of mercy. He did not worship the God of forgiveness." I recommend to readers Gandhi's *Supreme Power* which begins with his article, "God is One" . . . (*Young India*, September 25, 1924). He surely worshipped God as Love: "God is Love, not hate" (*Young India*, December 26, 1924). . . .

Ninth: Mr. Grenier wants us to be apprised of the importance of Gandhi's "obsession with *brahmacharya*, or sexual chastity." He is apparently unaware of Gandhi's own definition of the word in the chapter in his autobiography on the subject: "*Brahmacharya* means control of the senses in thought, word, and deed." If we are going to portray the historical Gandhi truthfully we should show that while *brahmacharya* includes sexual restraint, it also includes control of all the senses, including one's appetite. This accounts for Gandhi's misunderstood dietary experiments, rather than the problem of elimination which obsesses Mr. Grenier. . . .

Tenth: That "Margaret Sanger argued her views on birth control with such vigor that Gandhi had a nervous breakdown." I do not know what authority diagnosed this, but the doctors put him to bed for high blood pressure . . . M. Desai, December 13, 1935, in *Works*, LXXI, 169n).

Eleventh: That Gandhi "was bitterly hostile" to education. He opposed Western education, but was a great promoter of what we would call practical education in the spirit of service. Witness his school at Phoenix in 1909, his teaching with Kallenbach at the Tolstoy Farm in 1910, his work at Tagore's Shantineketan in 1915, his lifelong chancellorship of the university he founded in 1920, his ashram schools, . . . and, above all, his Basic Education Program for India.

Twelfth: Gandhi's supposed desire to have "all diabolical machinery and technology abolished," which Mr. Grenier illustrates with the fictional episode of Gandhi's "fury" over Bleriot's first flight over the Channel. This flight occurred on July 25, 1908, when Gandhi was not in England but was about to be sentenced to hard labor in a South African prison. As for Gandhi's supposed hatred of machinery, the film shows part of his long quest for the perfection of the *charka*, a machine for spinning yarn. Gandhi also promoted appropriate technology . . . to improve the life of villagers. What he objected to was the importation of mass-produced goods which made India dependent upon imports and destroyed local crafts and machinery.

Thirteenth: "Gandhi seems to have written less about home rule for India than he did about enemas, and excrement, and latrine cleaning." Not so. His first and probably his most popular book was titled *Indian Home Rule* (1909). There is no book on the other subject that so intrigues Mr. Grenier, though the *Key to Health* contains minor references to constipation and diet. . . .

Fourteenth: That "Gandhi was an extremely vocal individual, and . . . rarely fell silent." This is an extraordinary inversion of the extent to which Gandhi developed control of his talking. The writer says nothing of the fact that Gandhi observed silence for a whole day of each week (try it some time) for twenty-seven years. In 1935 he was silent for a month, in order to catch up with work; in 1944-45 he was silent for three months! . . .

This is not the end of the catalogue of inventions in "The Gandhi Nobody Knows," but it should suffice to show that the major facts are in error. Check my facts—I have given the references, and have tried to give them in the truthful spirit of Gandhi with all of his inconsistencies and quirks.

JAMES W. GOULD
Scripps College
Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Richard Grenier's comments, from the petty (*Hai Rama*) and absurd (India as spiritually impoverished) to the scurrilous (emphasis on nude massages) show a great knowledge of the details of Gandhi's life and not an ounce of understanding.

STEPHEN SCOTT
Calabasas, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Hundreds of persons, who knew Gandhi personally or studied his life extensively, have held him to be one of the moral giants of the century. Comes now movie critic Richard Grenier and declares Gandhi a fraud, reminding us, in a base appeal to religious prejudice, that Gandhi "worshipped cows," and asserting, without a shred of evidence, that he "sometimes verged on lunacy." . . . Directly or indirectly, Mr. Grenier accuses Gandhi of nearly everything from scatology to nihilism. The transparency of his motive—character assassination—is exceeded only by the opaqueness of his understanding of the man.

Mr. Grenier's "exposé" follows a pattern characteristic of most "hate" literature. Thus the opening suggestion that, given the reams of Gandhi literature (480 tomes), which include numerous "inconsistencies," any good the reader may have heard about the man must undoubtedly be contradicted in some part of the literature, and that, alas, it falls to the present author to discover the truth and tell the public about the man "nobody knows." (One wonders how many of these books the author read—480? 200? 10?) Then come the cheap shots, which denigrate the man by filling the reader's mind with unseemly, if irrelevant, matter: descriptions of Gandhi defecating, giving or taking enemas, sleeping nude with "teenage girls," etc. . . .

We are also told about the most horrible and strange aspects of his environment and his followers, apparently in the hope that we will transfer these images to the man himself. Thus we are told about Indian parliamentarians "defecating all over the place," about one of Gandhi's followers who drank urine daily, about another who had spiritual contact with Beethoven, and all the ugly details of the caste system.

Mr. Grenier suggests that Gandhi was a hypocrite and a "leader looking for a cause," mainly because he was a British loyalist for much of his life and only turned against the British when it was convenient to do so. As much has been said about George Washington (who, incidentally, also coexisted with a caste [slave] system to which he was much less opposed than Gandhi was to his). Most preposterous of all is Mr. Grenier's imputation of nihilism to Gandhi; the main evidence for this charge is a single statement by an Indian poet who,

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according to Mr. Grenier—are you ready for this?—"sensed a strong current of nihilism in Gandhi." . . .

Some of Mr. Grenier's points are petty almost beyond comment. Why, for example, should Gandhi be mocked for considering himself "an expert on diet" merely because he never "heard of a protein or a vitamin"? (I'm afraid this reveals the author to be more of a creature of Western TV culture than he might otherwise let on.) Why should Gandhi be criticized for saying, amid extremely unsanitary conditions, that a bathroom "should be so clean and inviting that anyone would enjoy eating there"? (Does Mr. Grenier prefer dirty bathrooms?) And what if Gandhi's last words, *"Hai Rama"*—which Mr. Grenier so brilliantly interprets for us—really do not mean "God" in English but the seventh reincarnation of Vishnu? Would Mr. Grenier have preferred a Hail Mary, a menorah lighting, a Lutheran recitation? The man *was* Hindu, after all (a fact which Mr. Grenier, when convenient, reminds us of *ad nauseam*). . . .

The fact is, most great historical figures have notable defects, yet each is the sum total of his deeds and words and must be fairly viewed. . . . It is an ugly bigotry that allows us, so easily and smugly, to twist a highly moral and principled man like Gandhi into the hideous figure Mr. Grenier presents. Mr. Grenier's writings are almost uniformly superb, but this one does not pass muster. . . .

David J. Cannon
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

I read Richard Grenier's review of *Gandhi* with disbelief, shock, and dismay. . . . The Gandhi whom the world knows; who woke the Indian people out of their centuries-long sleep of slavery and servility; who instilled in them feelings of self-respect and pride; who inspired them to "do or die" in pursuit of their lost dignity and freedom; who taught them not to be carried away by feelings of hatred and revenge and to treasure the virtues of tolerance, charity, and love; the Gandhi who, through waking up India, woke up the oppressed and exploited of the entire Third World to reclaim their rights and thus changed the history of the world—this Gandhi turns out to be a figment of the imagination of simple-minded journalists like Margaret Bourke-White and calculating and opportunistic film-makers like Richard Attenborough.

First, about the movie. The most obvious gap, according to Mr. Grenier, in the historical accuracy of the movie is the complete absence of any reference to Gandhi's loyalty to the British empire in his early career, practically till 1918 when he was forty-nine-years-old. Mr. Grenier's point is quite valid, although the conclusions he draws from it are not. In his loyalty to the Raj, Gandhi was not unique but typical of many Indians of his generation. . . . This shows that Gandhi did not start with any inherent bias against the Raj but turned against it only when he was convinced of its unjust and tyrannical nature. . . .

Gandhi was indeed too idealistic in his attitude to Hitler and the Nazis, but every objection that is raised to his ethic of nonviolence can also be raised to that of Jesus Christ by whom he was deeply influenced. . . .

It is the height of absurdity and irresponsibility to say that Gandhi "half-welcomed" the civil war that broke out in the last days of the Raj and that the transition to independence would have gone more smoothly and swiftly without "this irrational, wildly erratic holy man." The mutual killings by Hindus and Muslims were the undoing of everything that Gandhi had striven for in his life and he was totally devastated by this carnage. . . .

In his observations on Hinduism and the Hindus, Mr. Grenier reaches a new limit in indecency and irresponsibility. . . . I will first comment on his logic: Gandhi was a Hindu; Gandhi was erratic, hypocritical, dictatorial, racially biased, sexually obsessed, a lover of filth: therefore all Hindus are such and Hinduism is a despicable religion. How about a similar syllogism? Hitler was a European; Hitler was a racist, a fascist, and a murderer: therefore all Europeans are racists, fascists, and murderers.

Hinduism is a very complex religion and India is a complex country. It is difficult for Westerners, particularly for modern Westerners, to understand Hinduism. This is not to say that everything in Hinduism is noble and ideal. Hinduism suffers from the distortions and corruptions that all organized religions do. Perhaps the share of such things in Hinduism is larger because Hinduism has been under siege for about a thousand years. . . .

One would normally expect that a person writing on another religion and culture would have some humility. . . . Not so Mr. Grenier. . . . He pontificates that "concepts of mercy and forgiveness are absent from Hinduism. In Hinduism, men do not pray to God for forgiveness, and a man's sins are never forgiven —indeed, there is no one out there to do the forgiving." . . . What then is the meaning of reincarnation? Is the incarnated God not a personal God? Is incarnation itself not an act of supreme mercy and love on the part of God to save man, to forgive him? What do the multitude of Hindus worship in their temples if it is not a personal God, an ocean of mercy and love? . . .

Mr. Grenier has misrepresented, maligned, and abused a great man, a great religion, and a magnificent civilization. The arrogance with which he does this is a product of the affluence and technological superiority of the West, which Mr. Grenier confuses with moral superiority. . . .

Govind Narain Sharma
Acadia University
Wolfville, Nova Scotia

To the Editor of Commentary:

I'm sure biographical information on Richard Grenier would shed some light on his venom toward Gandhi, India, and Hinduism. Anyone as prolific, active, controversial, and complex as Gandhi can provide more than enough information on which to build a case, and Mr. Grenier does, in fact, yield to the temptation to depict Gandhi as Attila the Hindu. . . . He goes out of his way to attribute everything negative to Gandhi and indulges in a good deal of amateur psychoanalysis and weak speculation. The imbalance of this approach shows up at many points in his diatribe. . . .

Fortunately, Gandhi left behind a legacy of relatively consistent writings (as opposed to random private comments), any one of which contains more personal, spiritual, and social wisdom than Mr. Grenier would appear to be capable of in a lifetime.

Scott S. Smith
Thousand Oaks, California

Richard Grenier writes:

Before dealing with my correspondents, I must apprise the reader, who is probably unaware of this,

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that my article was followed by a small explosion of articles on Mahatma Gandhi, running from one end of the English-speaking world to the other and, above all, to London, as the prizes which *Gandhi* accumulated drew historians and serious writers to examine the film in the light of the true events of the period—taking the subject out of the hands of movie critics, not notorious for their knowledge of history. Almost without exception, with some differences of emphasis, all these writers have taken the same line I did: that the film is wildly unhistorical and grotesquely misrepresents Gandhi at almost every major point, Salman Rushdie—himself an Indian—went so far as to write, in the *Times* of London: "Attenborough's distortions [not only] mythologize, they also lie." Another Indian, Vithalbhai Jhaveri, a Gandhi biographer, wrote: "The most un-Gandhian thing about Richard Attenborough is his lying."

Although I chanced to lead the line of march in exposing this fraudulent movie-Gandhi, I was soon joined by Professor Elie Kedourie of the London School of Economics in the *New Republic* and by a front-page article, in, yes, the *Village Voice*, which attacked *Gandhi* the film, Gandhi the man, and Richard Attenborough, all with equal gusto. The article's author, Elliott Stein, had the good fortune of being in India at the time of *Gandhi*'s release, and he describes the boycott of the movie by Untouchables, the release of poisonous snakes in a movie house by opponents of the film, and the barbed wire which rings Gandhi's statue protectively in the Maidan, Calcutta's Central Park. I recommend his report enthusiastically. My own article has been excerpted in major newspapers across the U.S. and in several foreign countries, and been the object of many syndicated columns and supportive editorials. Expanded, it has just been published as an "instant" paperback book by Thomas Nelson.

An American newsmagazine, which originally ran a total endorsement of the movie, later, when disturbances broke out in South Africa in connection with the film's release, had to admit in its news columns that the movie, of course, had "oversimplified" Gandhi's life, and that the Mahatma (as I wrote) had given no support at all to blacks. Attenborough was compelled to cancel a planned trip to South Africa.

I had already reported that the government of India provided one-third of the financing of the movie and exercised complete story control, making it quite unambiguously an Indian propaganda movie, and I later learned from the New York *Times* that New Delhi is also subsidizing the film's release on the Indian domestic market as well, reducing admission fees by half. In the same dispatch, *Times* correspondent William K. Stevens indicated the extent to which Gandhi's precepts are ignored in present-day India: "Riots, caste violence, and killing by mobs are common. Massacres in the northeastern state of Assam and political killings in the Punjab region in northwest India seem to mock Gandhian virtues, as similar violence did in the last year or two of the Mahatma's life. Corruption in government is widely acknowledged to be endemic." Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Stevens reported, was nonetheless "delighted" at the film's triumph in Hollywood.

The government of Pakistan, for its part, finding the portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, unattractive to the point of defamation, rushed into print in a spirit of healthy partisanship with a book of its own, written by the country's Attorney General, defending Jinnah and, of course, attacking *Gandhi*.

But the greatest anti-*Gandhi* explosion, not surprisingly, has occurred in London, where the *Sunday Times* devoted an entire op-ed page to accounts under the giant title: "GANDHI: HOW THE TRIUMPH HAS SOURED." An accompanying cartoon showed a mock advertisement for the movie with the legend: "WINNER: BEST IRONY AWARD." The film has been attacked in the most contemptuous terms by noted British Tories such as Peregrine Worsthorne and Auberon Waugh, but also, on historical grounds, by H.V. Hodson, ex-editor of the *Sunday Times* and former constitutional adviser to the Viceroy of India, and by Sir Algernon Rumbold, KCMG, who served under both Conservative and Labor governments in the India Office (1929 to 1947) and thereafter in the Commonwealth Relations Office, ending his career in 1966 as Deputy Undersecretary of State. Although all of these might be thought to be defending the honor of the British Raj in India, there has been no counter-offensive from the "anti-imperialist" Left, the facts brought forward by Hodson and Rumbold and the falsity of the film being to all appearances incontrovertible.

Stephen Pile, in chasing down further picturesque details concerning Madeleine Slade—the British admiral's daughter presented in the movie as little short of a Gandhian saint—discovered that she had not only vacillated between worship of Gandhi and occult communication with the spirit of Beethoven, but that she was also a spotter of *yetis*, the living link between man and ape, which she referred to as "our lost brother in the mountains." I received a private letter from the editor of the London *Daily Telegraph* admitting ruefully that at the beginning "most of us tended to take this thing lying down."

They are lying down no longer. The *Sunday Telegraph* ran an excellent article by John Grigg, which concludes simply:

> Those whose knowledge of Gandhi is derived only from *Gandhi* will be encouraged to feel that British rule in India was both evil and absurd; that Gandhi was a pure exponent of pacifism and anti-imperialism; that his nonviolent methods in the end succeeded; and that they could be expected to succeed, in time, against any other empire or power bloc. Those propositions are all substantially false.

Grigg goes farther than I, asserting categorically, "So far from securing political independence for India, [Gandhi] probably delayed it by a quarter of a century. When the British left, they did so because they no longer had the resources for a world imperial role." Rumbold, after a lifetime of experience dealing with India, agrees, writing: "The British administration of India ended for many reasons . . . [but] it was the size and turbulence of India, rather than Gandhi's gimmicks, that were crucial."

Hodson and Rumbold, the first writing in the *Sunday Times* and the second in *Encounter*, give an account of two historical events completely at variance with the way these events are shown in the movie—the Amritsar massacre and the climax of Gandhi's 1930 "Salt March." In the film, Gurkhas, unruffled, deploy at Amritsar in a space "the size of Berkeley Square" and fire, unprovoked, at a family-

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picnic crowd in a holiday mood at the other end of the square. In history, it all took place in a tightly confined space, with 50 Gurkhas facing as many as 20,000 angry demonstrators—all or virtually all men—gathered in defiance of a ban and of a warning that they would be dispersed by force. Three days before, a similar mob had sacked buildings and murdered Europeans, and it looked as if a repeat performance was in the making. Neither Hodson nor Rumbold makes any attempt to excuse the massacre, Rumbold calling it "monstrous," "intolerable," and an "outrage," but the picture of a tiny military detachment, in danger at any moment of being overrun at close quarters by an angry mob, is quite different from the one given in *Gandhi*.

But if the scene at Amritsar is seriously distorted, it is probably very hard for members of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to credit the fact that the climax of Gandhi's Salt March —with a column of white-clad martyrs serenely approaching the entrance to a salt factory only to be clubbed senseless, rank after rank, by pitiless constables—is the product of a generous artistic license. At the end of the march, in May 1930, many Gandhians did, of course, attempt to enter a salt factory (to contest symbolically the British salt monopoly), but they were simply arrested, says Rumbold. "Indeed," he writes, "the objective of the demonstrators was not to create a fracas, but to go to jail and thus qualify for Congress party office." He says the scene in which the demonstrators, in columns of four, are coldbloodedly clubbed to the ground, their bodies then removed by grieving friends from under the feet of the policemen to make room for the next rank, "would be laughable if it were not a libel." Hodson, for his part, writes that "the scene of Indian policemen methodically bashing with their *lathis* rank after rank of a peaceful column of demonstrators is ridiculous." So the movie's shining dramatic pinnacle, the supreme demonstration of the Mahatma's *satyagraha*, Gandhian nonviolence achieving its ends by serving as a moral example to the world, is held by some highly respected British authorities never to have taken place, at least not as shown in the movie.

What actually did happen when *satyagraha* took to the field, Rumbold points out, was another matter. Gandhi's nonviolence against the Rowlatt Act in 1919 led to murderous riots in the Punjab and elsewhere. His nonviolence in 1920-22 brought a bloody uprising of Muslims against Hindus in Malabar. His nonviolent agitation preceding the Salt March in 1930 brought bloody rioting in Peshawar (not shown in the movie, of course). And Gandhi's accord with Lord Irwin in March 1931 was misunderstood as meaning "Hindu Rule" by the Hindus of Cawnpore, who promptly murdered 1,000 Muslims. Gandhi's nonviolent civil-disobedience campaign of 1932 brought more bloody rioting, as did his wartime "Quit India" campaign in 1942, all leading up to the independence massacres in which millions died as organized, armed gangs wiped out defenseless villages, or drove crowds of refugees into rivers to drown, or held up trains and murdered all their passengers. Such facts underlie Tagore's remark that it was disingenuous to call Gandhi's movement "nonviolent" and my own observation that not only did Gandhian techniques have little to offer Jews, Ethiopians (against Mussolini), or British and Czechoslovaks (against Hitler), but they didn't even work against Gandhi's fellow Indians.

Although it approaches the film with different assumptions from Rumbold, Hodson, and Grigg, perhaps the most interesting work in the British press's reappraisal of *Gandhi* was done in the *Times* by the Indian writer, Salman Rushdie, winner of the 1981 Booker Prize. He points out a detail I had glided over, Gandhi's lifelong fondness for Indian billionaire industrialists, "the man of the masses, dedicated to the simple life, self-denial, asceticism, who was financed all his life by super-capitalist patrons, and, some would say, hopelessly compromised by them." In conclusion Rushdie writes:

> The message of *Gandhi* is that the best way to gain your freedom is to line up, unarmed, and march toward your oppressors and permit them to club you to the ground; if you do this for long enough, you will embarrass them into going away. This is worse than nonsense. It is dangerous nonsense. Nonviolence was a strategy chosen for a particular people against a particular oppressor; to generalize from it is a suspect act. . . . *Gandhi* shows us a saint who vanquished an empire. This is a fiction.

All devotees of unintentional comedy will relish the scenes in *Gandhi* in which Bapu (Gandhi) reenacts his marriage for the benefit of a Western journalist (Kasturbai, Gandhi's wife, had died two years before the journalist, Margaret Bourke-White, first arrived in India); in which one man's hunger strike pacifies a rioting Calcutta and repentant hooligans promise Gandhi that they will adopt Muslim orphan children . . . or in which the partition (into India and Pakistan) is sorted out during a two-minute break in the independence negotiations. If this is the best film of 1982, God help the film industry.

As for *Gandhi* as a work of art, Nigel Andrews of the *Financial Times* (a major critic) had already written that the movie was "made from purest pietistic polyester . . . like an endless series of illustrated Sunday school tales simplified for our moral improvement. John Briley's script is . . . spectacularly unimaginative . . . a turgid series of lantern slides."

Attenborough's reaction to this barrage of criticism was a veritable fireworks display of incoherence. *Gandhi* had won more U.S. Academy Awards than any British film in history, how dare they criticize him? With the anger of the truly virtuous, he raged at his Tory critics, calling them all "semi-fascists." Since he would find this term hard to apply to the *Village Voice*, Attenborough lost his already weak command of English (he uses "criteria" in the singular), and could only call the author of the *Voice* article "that bugger Stein!" Although he announced at the Academy Awards ceremony in Hollywood that the prizes had been voted not for the film, but for Mahatma Gandhi himself (implying that the figure shown the Academy members in his film was the true Gandhi), Attenborough has made no serious attempt to justify even the gross historical fabrications in his work, claiming that he only exercised "artistic selection" ("film is an entertainment medium"), and, rather pathetically, quoting the tattered, good reviews the movie received when it first came out. But Attenborough put on his best manner when defending himself against Rushdie—who is, after all, an Indian—merely calling his criticism "scurrilous." ("Scurrilous" is a term of modera-

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tion for Sir Dickie, preferring, as he does, "semi-fascist" and "bugger.") Flapping about foolishly, Attenborough did not dispel a single one of the charges made by Rushdie, who had called *Gandhi* "appalling as history." He made, however, a curious admission.

For it appears that Sir Dickie "very much doubts" that nonviolent techniques would have worked against the Nazis. This being the case, whatever can be the meaning of *Gandhi*'s portentous final scene, in which Madeleine Slade, keening over the death of the Mahatma, observes mournfully to Margaret Bourke-White (Candice Bergen): "When we most needed it [plainly during World War II], he offered the world a way out of madness. But the world didn't see it." The "way out" was obviously nonviolence. But if nonviolent techniques wouldn't have worked against the Nazis, then the British were *right* in not listening to Gandhi's message, which would have led to calamity. Of course that left Hitler. Surely *he* should have taken to heart the message that Gandhi addressed to him, and personally at that. Surely *he* should have converted to nonviolence. Regrettably, he did not—to no one's surprise but Gandhi's. But was Hitler "the world"? Are Hitler and those who fought against him to be chastised in the same sermon? If all this seems of a magnificent silliness, I feel I have led the reader only a millimeter into the mind of Sir Dickie Attenborough.

MY WARMEST thanks for their complimentary letters or remarks to Christopher Dunn, Lena Mandel, Roy Traband, Johanna B. Angel, Robert Carlen, and Walter A. Sheldon. Aziz Beg makes a valuable contribution from a Pakistani viewpoint, as does Elliott Green with his detailed knowledge of the Khilafat movement at the dissolution of the Turkish empire.

Most of the hostile letters make me feel I am in the presence of a phenomenon of a nearly religious nature. In general, their authors have not read my article carefully, often attributing to me statements the exact opposite of those I actually made. They tend to be highly emotional, abusive in language, strewn with errors, incoherent, and, despite some shabby pretenses at erudition, not proceeding from informed opinion at all but from a deeply irrational animus.

The median letter is perhaps that of Robin Woodsworth Carlsen. Moderate in tone, it begins with compliments, but then goes on to say I have implied that Gandhi was "perhaps the worst hypocrite who ever lived" (which I did *not* imply) and that I have an almost "demoniacal" compulsion to destroy him. The fact is that Gandhi had certain traits I quite admire: he was fearless (which I wrote), he made repeated attempts to mitigate the horrors of the caste system (which I wrote), and I feel his most enduring contribution might have been improving the lot of India's Untouchables (which I wrote most clearly). Mr. Carlsen uses a rather curious phrase in saying that my portrait of Gandhi is "cruelly truthful." I thank him for the "truthful," as I made the portrait as true as I could, but why does he impute cruelty to me? Should I have said, like the doctor, "Now this is going to hurt"? I feel Mr. Carlsen approaches me in friendship, but where we differ most is in his insistence that there is something to be gained from the "innocent satisfaction" of watching what he seems to realize himself is a totally falsified film. I think a film as false as *Gandhi* is quite bad for you.

Salman Rushdie, reared in Bombay, writes: "To make *Gandhi* appeal to the Western market, he had to be sanctified and turned into Christ—an odd fate for a crafty Gujarati lawyer." I would not have put it quite this way, but still think Rushdie is on to something. The movie-Gandhi has been most decidedly "Christianized," and the Gandhi image, for his followers in the West, is plainly a religion-substitute. Certainly they resist attempts to draw an accurate picture of their god-hero with zealotry of the most extreme religious sort.

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HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH TO DRINK IF YOU'RE DRIVING?

USING THIS CHART MAY HELP YOU KNOW YOUR LIMIT.

First, you should understand that drinking any amount of alcohol can impair your ability to drive.

The generally accepted way to measure intoxication is by your Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). In most areas, the legal definition of intoxication is .10 percent BAC and above. However, long before you reach .10 BAC, your judgment and motor skills deteriorate rapidly. In fact, some states include the definition of impaired driving ability, which usually begins at .05 percent.

Important factors to keep in mind are how much you've drunk in a given period of time, how much you weigh and whether you've been eating. Your age, individual metabolism and experience with drinking are also factors. However, it simply is not true that beer or wine is less likely to make you drunk than so-called "hard" drinks. A 6-ounce glass of wine, a 12-ounce can of beer or 1½ ounces of 86-proof whiskey have about the same amount of alcohol and will have about the same effect on you.

How to estimate your Blood Alcohol Concentration. Although the effects of alcohol vary a great deal, the average effects are shown in the accompanying chart prepared by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Find your weight in the left-hand column and then refer to the number of drinks you have had or intend to have over a two-hour period. For example, if you weigh 160 pounds and have had four beers over the first two hours you're drinking, your Blood Alcohol Concentration would be dangerously beyond .05 percent, and your driving ability would be seriously impaired—a dangerous driving situation. Six beers in the same period would give you a BAC of over .10 percent—the level generally accepted as proof of intoxication.

It is easier to get drunk than it is to get sober. The effects of drinking do taper off as the alcohol passes through your body, but the drop is slow. In the example above, the person who had six beers would still have significant traces of alcohol in his blood six hours later.

Even if you're not drinking, other drivers may be. Your best protection is still the seat belts in your car. Accidents do happen, and wearing lap and shoulder belts doubles your chances of coming through one alive.

DRINKS (TWO-HOUR PERIOD)

Weight	1½ ozs. 86° Liquor or 12 ozs. Beer											
100	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
120	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
140	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
160	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
180	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
200	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
220	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
240	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

BE CAREFUL DRIVING BAC TO .05% — **DRIVING IMPAIRED .05-.09%** — **DO NOT DRIVE .10% & UP**

Source: NHTSA

The chart shows average responses. Younger people generally become impaired sooner, while older people have more vision problems at night. Tests show a wide range of responses even for people of the same age and weight. For some people, one drink may be too many.

Having a full stomach will postpone somewhat the effects of alcohol, but it will not keep you from becoming drunk.

Black coffee, cold showers, or walking around outdoors will do nothing to make you sober. Of course, someone who claims, "I'll be okay as soon as I get behind the wheel," may be making a fatal misjudgment.

At General Motors, we have developed a device which tests a driver's reflexes and motor responses before it allows the car to start. The Department of Transportation is now testing it in California as a deterrent to repeat offenders. Today, you, the driver, have to know your limits and when you've gone beyond them. If you have any doubts, don't drive.

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Appeasement By Any Other Name

Norman Podhoretz

WHEN two-and-a-half years ago Ronald Reagan was elected to the Presidency, almost everyone expected that there would be a marked change in the direction of American foreign policy. Nor was there much disagreement over the nature of this anticipated change. How could there have been? Of the leading political figures of the age, Ronald Reagan was perhaps the most sharply defined. He stood without ambiguity for the view that the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union was the central issue of our time; that it could be defined as a struggle between good and evil; that in this struggle the United States had been falling behind while an expansionist Soviet Union was forging ahead; and that unless we made every effort to restore and assert our power, the future would belong to the forces of totalitarian Communism.

Obviously, by itself this view did not yield a blueprint for day-to-day action in international affairs. But just as obviously it suggested motion in a certain direction: a significant increase in defense spending so as to restore the deteriorating military balance, and a new determination to resist the expansion of Soviet imperial control and influence. No one who voted for Reagan could have had any doubt that this was what he would aim for, and it was therefore reasonable to suppose that the decisive majority by which he was elected signified the crystallization of a new consensus in American public opinion on the seriousness of the Soviet threat and the need to take action against it.

It is very important to recognize, however, that Reagan did not create this new consensus. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that it created him; or, to be still more precise, that its prior existence made his election possible. As evidence of this proposition, we can point to the dramatic rise in alarm over the Soviet threat after the invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. We can also point to the growth of support for increases in defense spending charted throughout the 1970's by all the public-opinion polls. And we can, finally, point to a palpable intensification of nationalist sentiment in the country, beginning with the surprising outburst of patriotism that accompanied the bicentennial celebrations of 1976 and culminating in the pro-American demonstrations provoked by the humiliating seizure of the hostages in Iran three years later.

But even more striking than any of this was the radical alteration in both the tone and substance of the Carter administration's foreign policy in its fourth and—as it would turn out—final year in office. Jimmy Carter, who throughout his campaign for the Presidency in 1976 had promised to cut defense spending by at least $5 billion and also never to lie to the American people, could now be discovered boasting that he had broken both of these promises by raising defense spending in his first three years as President. Carter, who had begun by congratulating the nation on having overcome its "inordinate fear of Communism," and who had spoken of the obsolescence of military power as a factor in international conflict, now not only grew alarmed over the prospect of a Soviet takeover of the Persian Gulf, but enunciated a new presidential doctrine committing the United States to the use of force in order to prevent it. Carter, who had begun by stigmatizing the American effort to save South Vietnam from Communism as a symptom of "intellectual and moral poverty," and who had cooperated in administering the *coup de grâce* to the Somoza government in Nicaragua, now cut off American aid to the Communist-dominated Sandinista regime which had replaced Somoza, and in addition sent money and military advisers to El Salvador to help prevent a Communist-dominated guerrilla force from taking power there.

Without denying that these highly dramatic reversals represented a conscientious effort by a sitting President of the United States to discharge his constitutional responsibilities as the guardian of the national security, I would nevertheless maintain that Carter the President would not have done such things without the permission (or even, perhaps, the urging) of Carter the politician. For the politician in Carter could see all too clearly that a shift in the climate of opinion was robbing his policies as President of the popularity they

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had briefly seemed to enjoy and thereby jeopardizing his chances for reelection to a second term.

In the end, Carter lost to a much more plausible and, to all appearances much more reliable, exponent of the policies to which Carter himself had so recently become a convert. The new consensus on the Soviet threat which had already waxed strong enough to force a change of direction on Jimmy Carter was by now too strong to settle for him when in Ronald Reagan it could get the real thing.

Yet no sooner had it swept Reagan into office than questions began to be raised about the precise meaning and limits of the new consensus. Those who opposed Reagan, and some who supported him, were quick to deny that his election had provided him with a clear "mandate" in foreign policy. No one went so far as to deny that Carter had been badly hurt by the national humiliation over Iran and his inability to do anything about it, but many denied that the Iranian episode was much more than a freakish accident. Reagan had won, they said, mainly because of economic factors, or because so many different groups had come to dislike Carter for a great variety of reasons forming no coherent political pattern. In any case, if Reagan should make a serious attempt to put his "simplistic" view of the world into practice, he would soon find himself frustrated by "reality" (by which his opponents meant their own view of the world).

At first not much consolation could be derived by Reagan's opponents from this prediction. In his early months in office, he seemed bent on doing almost exactly what the critics were so sure he would be unable to do. Within days of moving into the White House, he spoke of Communism as a bizarre historical phenomenon destined to disappear in the foreseeable future, and he gave every indication of wishing to hurry the process along. In his economic program, the only area of government spending to be increased rather than cut was defense. The emphasis on arms control, which had been so marked in the past three administrations, was to be muted in favor of an arms build-up aimed at restoring the strategic balance between the United States and the Soviet Union. Through his Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., he served unambiguous notice that he regarded the guerrilla movement in El Salvador as an effort by the Soviet Union, acting through Cuba and Nicaragua, to extend its imperial reach in Central America, and he expressed his determination to prevent this.

Not surprisingly, there were cries of alarm, especially over the language in which these intentions were described. But anyone looking more closely than it suited the critics to do could see that they had less to worry about than they imagined. First of all, the Reagan administration implicitly agreed with its opponents in interpreting the election not so much as a mandate for changing the foreign policy of the nation as for reforming the economy. Most of the energy during Reagan's early months in office went into his economic program, while foreign policy was treated almost as a distraction. Thus the heavy emphasis placed on holding the line in Central America, and especially for the moment in El Salvador, was soon softened, evidently because the White House feared that the controversy Haig had provoked both in the Congress and in the media would undercut support for the President's economic progam.

Nor was this the only sign that wherever the interests of Reagan's economic program conflicted with the interests of his foreign policy, the former would be favored over the latter. For example, he revoked the grain embargo instituted by Carter against the Soviets in response to the invasion of Afghanistan, even though he was supposedly against doing anything to help or strengthen them. No matter that this move was rationalized with the argument that embargoes were ineffective and that we were doing more harm to ourselves than to the Soviets. The fact was that on this issue, Reagan showed that his was an administration which—in George Will's devastating characterization—"loved commerce more than it loathed Communism," a characterization that would later be richly confirmed by the decision to go on subsidizing the Polish economy even after the Soviet-ordered institution of martial law by the Quisling Jaruzelski regime.

To be sure, there were two major exceptions to this subordination of foreign policy to economic considerations. One was the President's brave and stubborn determination to hold out for a significant increase in defense spending even when the pressure to back down became nearly intolerable. Yet the very erosion of the support Reagan had originally enjoyed on this issue could be blamed in some measure on his own decision to give priority to the economy over foreign policy. For if reducing government spending was our most important order of business, there was no way that the defense budget could be spared from the ax, and there would always be enough evidence of "waste" in the Pentagon to reassure deficit-minded Republicans that in opposing the President on this issue they were not endangering the national security. (Most Democrats were already reassured.) Here indeed was a "reality" to frustrate Reagan's ideas, but in this case it was a Coleridgean reality that he himself was at least half helping to create.

The other great exception to the favoring of commerce over anti-Communism was Reagan's staunch opposition to the construction of a pipeline that would carry natural gas from the Soviet Union to Western Europe. Here too, however, his ideas were undermined by a reality he himself had helped to create. As apologists for the pipeline kept saying, by selling American grain to the Soviets, Reagan had not exactly put himself in the best

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position to demand that the Europeans refuse to sell equipment for building the pipeline. American opponents of the pipeline countered by arguing that there were great differences between the two deals. Grain sales, they said, were a straight form of trade, whereas the subsidized pipeline deal was a form of aid; grain sales cost the Soviets hard currency, whereas the Soviets would ultimately earn hard currency through the pipeline; grain sales gave the Soviets no political leverage over the United States, whereas becoming the supplier of energy to Western Europe would enable the Soviets to threaten a cutoff as a way of exerting pressure in some future crisis.

Yet whatever the merits of these arguments, in the eyes of Reagan's European critics and their American allies, the United States was at the very best being inconsistent and at the worst hypocritical. Either Reagan wanted to declare "economic warfare" on the Soviet Union or he did not. But if he did, he could not ask the Europeans to shoulder the burden while decreeing a special exemption for the American farmer.

The net result of this assignment to economic policy of a higher priority than foreign policy was the creation of a vacuum into which the opposition to the 1980 consensus on the Soviet threat was able to move. Discredited by Iran and Afghanistan and demoralized by Reagan's landslide victory, the opposition (which included Republicans as well as Democrats) was now handed a chance to regroup much sooner than it had expected. Even its severest critics would have to grant that it went on to make the most of this happy windfall.

II

THE opposition to the 1980 consensus on the Soviet threat was, and is, heavily influenced by two closely related though distinguishable elements: pacifism and isolationism. I am well aware that most members of the opposition would indignantly deny that their ideas can be identified either with pacifism or with isolationism. But as I hope to show, my use of these terms is fully warranted by the historical pedigree of what the opposition says and the logical consequences of the policies it advocates.

Of the two major elements whose influence has shaped the opposition to the 1980 consensus, pacifism is at once the more elusive and the more pervasive. It is elusive because there are in the United States only a minuscule number of people frankly and openly committed to pacifism in the strict sense of the term: the belief that war is the greatest of all evils and that nothing, literally nothing, nothing whatever, is worth defending by force of arms or can justify resorting to war. Indeed, even among the few self-declared pacifists in America, there are many who make an exception for "wars of national liberation" and are even willing to defend terrorism.

But if pacifism in the strict sense can scarcely be said to exist in America, pacifism in a looser form has become more influential than it has ever been before except perhaps in England in the period between the two world wars. What made pacifism so fashionable then was the carnage of World War I—a war that no one seemed able to explain or justify and yet that had decimated an entire generation of young men who went blindly to the slaughter mouthing "mindless" and "meaningless" patriotic slogans.

This pacifist tide was fed, however, not only by memories of World War I but also by apocalyptic visions of what a second world war would be like. It was widely believed in the 30's that there was no defense against aerial bombardment, and that the next war would therefore spell the end of the world, or at least of "civilization as we know it." Along with being evil, then, war had become senseless and could no longer be seen in Clausewitzian terms as a continuation of policy by other means.

The same combination of disillusioned memory and apocalyptic anticipation is at work in the spread of pacifism in America today. The memory in our case is of course the memory of Vietnam whose effect on American attitudes toward war in general has been strikingly similar to the effect of World War I on the British in the 20's and 30's. In 1933, the notorious resolution "that this house will in no circumstances fight for its king and country" carried the day in a debate at Oxford; fifty years later, in 1983 (just after, ironically, the same resolution had been debated again at Oxford and this time defeated), a joint session of the U.S. Congress cheered when Ronald Reagan interrupted his appeal for increased aid to El Salvador with the words: "Now, before I go any further, let me say to those who invoke the memory of Vietnam: there is no thought of sending American combat troops to Central America." The Senators and Congressmen cheered not merely because they approved of Reagan's declaration in the case of Central America but because the "thought of sending American combat troops" anywhere, or for any purpose, has been rendered almost taboo by "the memory of Vietnam." Even those, both in and out of Congress, who insist that there are "places where they would favor American action," as Meg Greenfield of the Washington *Post* puts it, "never can seem to think of one this side of San Diego." In America today, slogans like "No More Vietnams," "Hell No, We Won't Go," and "Nothing is ever settled by force" have become the functional equivalent of the resolution never to fight for king and country.

AS IN the 30's, moreover, the pacifist attitudes growing out of the country's most recent experience of war have been reinforced by apocalyptic visions of the future. What the idea of aerial bombardment did for British

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pacifism in the 30's, the idea of nuclear missiles has done for American (and of course West European) pacifism in the 80's. But nuclear weapons have been a much greater blessing to pacifism than aerial bombardment ever was. Whereas not everyone in the 30's agreed that there was no defense against aerial bombardment, virtually everyone in the United States today believes that there is no defense against nuclear missiles. More and more Americans have come to doubt, furthermore, that a limited nuclear war is possible. It is now almost universally assumed that any use of nuclear weapons anywhere would inevitably escalate into all-out nuclear war and the certain destruction of the entire world. This means that for the first time ever, the basic pacifist premise—that war is a greater evil than any objective for which it might be fought—has acquired plausibility in the eyes of many people otherwise not inclined to pacifism either by temperament or by philosophy. Hence the emergence of what has been called nuclear pacifism.

Nuclear pacifism expresses itself in a variety of positions. At its most forthright and logical, it calls for unilateral disarmament on the plainly sensible ground that if nuclear weapons can never and must never be used, there is no point in possessing them at all. Some unilateralists think that if the West gave up its nuclear arsenal, the Soviets would follow suit. Others admit that the Soviet Union might take advantage of such a move to compel a Western surrender. But whether they are optimistic or pessimistic about the Soviet response, all unilateralists by definition agree that the West should immediately begin getting rid of its own nuclear weapons without waiting for the Soviets to respond in kind.

Although unilateralism has become a serious political force in Western Europe, it has thus far made very little headway in the United States. Perhaps the closest any reputable American group has come to endorsing unilateralism is the pastoral letter of the Roman Catholic bishops ("The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response"). To be sure, the bishops explicitly say that they "do not advocate a policy of unilateral disarmament." They are willing to accord "a strictly conditioned moral acceptance" to the temporary or interim possession of nuclear weapons by the West as a deterrent, provided that deterrence is "used as a step on the way toward progressive disarmament." Yet they declare their "profound skepticism about the moral acceptability of any use of nuclear weapons." But if it is immoral to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances (even in retaliation for a nuclear attack), they might just as well be renounced unilaterally for all the good they do even as a deterrent or a bargaining chip.

The West German bishops, whose minds have been concentrated wonderfully by the overwhelming superiority of the Soviet conventional forces poised against their country and deterred only by the NATO promise that an invasion would if necessary be met with a nuclear response, have been sensitive to the unilateralist implications contained in the casuistical formulations of their American brethren. For their part, the German bishops have come out in support of NATO's policy on this point. So too have the French bishops.

Here, then, we have the representatives of a constituency which not long ago was among the most hawkish in America, and perhaps the most resolutely anti-Communist, throwing their moral and political weight on the side of a position verging on unilateral disarmament, and doing so in the full awareness (as the pastoral letter suggests) that this might well result in a Soviet-dominated world. What more vivid measure could there be of the great boost that nuclear weapons have given to pacifism in America?

HISTORICALLY, pacifist thought, while in itself always enjoying only a limited appeal and often operating on the margins of political debate, has nevertheless exerted a great influence on the mainstream—not under its own doctrinal flag but in the bowdlerized form of illusions about and pressures for disarmament. In the period between the two world wars, these pacifist-inspired illusions and pressures gave us the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 renouncing war. They also found more concrete expression in the Washington naval armaments treaty of 1922 (limiting the number of American, British, Japanese, French, and Italian warships) and the London naval agreement of 1930 (which set limits on the size of submarines and other warships).

The best that can be said for these efforts is that if their purpose was to prevent or lessen the risk of war by reducing armaments, they obviously failed. But the worst that can be said for them—that if they had any effect at all, it was to increase rather than decrease the chances of war—is closer to the truth. Thus the naval agreement of 1922, recently cited by the historian Gaddis Smith as a successful example of a "freeze," is seen by Barbara Tuchman (who is at least as dovish as Smith in her attitude toward nuclear weapons) to have "fueled the rising Japanese militarism that led eventually to Pearl Harbor."

Mrs. Tuchman's judgment is shared by most historians, as is the view taken by Eugene V. Rostow, the former director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, both of the Washington "freeze" of 1922 and of the limitations later negotiated in London in 1930. "The post-World War I arms-limitation agreements . . . helped to bring on World War II, by reinforcing the blind and willful optimism of the West, thus inhibiting the possibility of military preparedness and diplomatic actions through which Britain and France could easily have deterred the war."

Some who accept this assesssment (including

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Mrs. Tuchman) think that the invention of nuclear weapons has changed everything by making the prevention of war a more overriding imperative than it was in the pre-nuclear age. But as Mrs. Tuchman herself recognizes, the record thus far simply does not bear out this idea. On the contrary, negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union over nuclear weapons show almost exactly the same characteristics as the arms-control agreements of the pre-nuclear past.

First of all, negotiations over nuclear weapons have not led to real reductions in the quantity or quality of those weapons, and such limitations as they have succeeded in establishing have not notably lessened the risk of war. Take as an example even the proudest single achievement of arms control in the nuclear age—the Test Ban Treaty of 1963. Far from eliminating or even cutting down on the testing of nuclear weapons (and therefore of their further development), the treaty has been followed by an increase in the number of such tests. The only effect the treaty has had on testing has been to drive it underground. That may, as Mrs. Tuchman drily notes, be a gain for the environment but it is not a gain for disarmament.

Secondly, arms-control agreements in the nuclear age, like the disarmament agreements of the 20's and 30's, have resulted in cutbacks by the democratic side and increases by the totalitarian side. Under SALT I, the Soviet Union took full advantage of what was legally permitted and forged ahead to increase the quantity of its nuclear weapons while also improving their quality. This is exactly how the Japanese and later the Germans acted in the 1930's. The United States (following the precedent set by itself and the other Western democracies in the 1930's after the naval agreements) either stood still or cut back in the years after SALT I was ratified. The one significant advance we did make, the placing of more than one warhead on a single missile (MRV), is now regarded by almost all arms-control enthusiasts as "destabilizing." But in view of the fact that this innovation was developed in order to conform to the provisions of SALT I (which limited the number of missiles rather than the number of warheads), it demonstrates that the process of arms control has not even been capable of achieving one of its minimal objectives, which is (in the words of the Scowcroft Report) to "help channel modernization into stabilizing rather than destabilizing paths."*

There is nothing arbitrary or accidental about this record of failure. It stems directly from the pacifist illusion that wars are caused by arms and can therefore be prevented by reducing or eliminating arms. But wars are *not* caused by arms. Salvador de Madariaga, who chaired the League of Nations Disarmament Commission, came to believe that disarmament was a "mirage" because it tackled the problem of war "upside down and at the wrong end. . . . Nations don't distrust each other because they are armed; they are armed because they distrust each other. And therefore to want disarmament before a minimum of common agreement on fundamentals is as absurd as to want people to go undressed in winter."

This simple and unanswerable observation explains why on the one hand there are no arms on the border between the United States and Canada and why on the other hand it is indeed "absurd" to expect that anything much can be done about the arms on the border between East and West Europe.

But there is a further point to be made. The "common agreement on fundamentals" that de Madariaga rightly sees as a necessary precondition of disarmament can never be reached with a nation whose ambitions are to overturn the existing international system and to replace it with a new system in which it will enjoy hegemony. Because Nazi Germany was such a nation, it was foolish of Chamberlain and other Western leaders to imagine that war with Hitler could be avoided by negotiated concessions (or "appeasement," to use the then respectable term). And because the Soviet Union is also such a nation, it is equally foolish to imagine that a "common agreement on fundamentals" can be arrived at between Moscow and the West.

To say that the Soviet Union's aim is to create a new international system in which it would enjoy hegemony is not to suggest (as the vulgar caricature has it) that there is a "timetable" or a "blueprint" for world conquest guiding every action the Kremlin takes. It is, however, to recognize that the strategy of the Soviet Union is to move toward a greater and greater expansion of its power and influence, at a pace and by tactical means that combine maximum prudence with maximum opportunism.

In other words, wherever a chance presents itself and the risks are not too great, the Soviets will take advantage of it. If force must be used, as in Afghanistan, it will be used, but the clear preference of the Soviet leadership is either to employ surrogates to do the fighting, or better still, to win through intimidation rather than through war.

Since their military arsenal is designed to serve this expansionist strategy, the Soviets will never voluntarily surrender an advantage in the balance of military power. Nor will they ever enter into (or honor) any agreement that prevents them from achieving military superiority. To accept anything less than superiority—even equality or parity—would be tantamount to accepting the present

* This statement occurs in a brief summary of the *non-pacifist* case, such as it is, for arms-control negotiations with the Soviet Union. What little there is to be said in favor of arms control from a non-pacifist perspective is also well put at greater length in "The Realities of Arms Control" by the Harvard Nuclear Study Group (*Atlantic*, June 1983).

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international system. Indeed, because their ideological or political attractiveness has diminished in recent years, and because they suffer from a great disadvantage to the West in the economic area as well, their reliance on military power has increased and will ineluctably grow in the future. For how else can they compensate for their other weaknesses in the overall "correlation of forces"?

The United States, by contrast, leads an alliance whose strategic objective is to maintain "stability," and our military arsenal is designed to serve this defensive purpose. Far from pursuing superiority, the United States voluntarily gave it up, allowing the Soviets to achieve parity on the theory that they had surrendered their originally revolutionary aims and had now become a "status-quo power," content with the present international arrangements. The Soviets themselves made nonsense of this theory by continuing their military build-up even after they had caught up and reached parity. In addition they sent Cuban surrogates to Africa, and then their own troops into Afghanistan (while also providing military support to Communist guerrillas in Central America). So much, then, for the idea that they had become a "status-quo power," and so much therefore for the chances of arriving at de Madariaga's "common agreement on fundamentals."

The brutal truth is that with one side eager (for economic or other reasons) to cut back on its armaments and the other side eager to consolidate and enhance its advantages, disarmament negotiations offer only a fraudulent hope. In the 30's, the Germans and the Japanese built up their armed forces (with or without cheating) because they wanted to do so, while the democracies—pushed by internal political and economic pressures to disarm—did not even fulfill their legal quotas under the various disarmament agreements. A similar pattern has developed in our own day under cover of the SALT process, during which we have either stood still or moved back while the Soviets have built and built and built, not only expanding and refining their nuclear arsenal but enlarging and improving every category of their conventional force as well. Yet so pervasive has the influence of the pacifist illusion become in the West that, even in the face of all this, hope continues to be invested in disarmament and the opposition to the 1980 consensus on the Soviet threat clamors for new and ever more radical measures.

III

It is in the guise of these new measures that the second major influence behind the opposition to the 1980 consensus—isolationism—has been able to stage a sensational comeback in American political culture. Like pacifism (to which it has no necessary logical connection but with which it can and always has comfortably allied itself), isolationism claims very few open adherents in the United States. For like pacifism too, isolationism was so discredited by World War II that those who have continued to believe in it, or those who have rediscovered it in recent years, rarely invoke its name in talking about their position. As if this did not cause enough trouble for frank and honest discussion, the name of isolationism (or sometimes neo-isolationism) has occasionally been claimed by writers like Robert W. Tucker and William Pfaff who for better or worse are not truly entitled to it. (Almost the only political commentator with any visibility today who both claims the title and *is* truly entitled to it is Earl Ravenal.)

However isolationism may be defined in the abstract, historically it has mainly meant a policy of American disengagement from the affairs, and especially the wars, of Europe. This is why the two latest manifestations of the anti-nuclear movement in the United States—the proposal that we commit ourselves to "no first use" of nuclear weapons, and the proposal that we commit ourselves to a "freeze" on the building, testing, and deployment of all such weapons—can legitimately be described as forms of isolationism.

It is true that most proponents of these measures deny that their intention is to disengage the United States from Europe, or that this would be the effect. Thus McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara, and Gerard Smith (who have now become collectively known in certain European circles as the "American gang of four") take great pains in their famous *Foreign Affairs* article endorsing no-first-use to insist that they come not to destroy but to *strengthen* the American commitment to the defense of Western Europe. It is, they write, the "disarray that currently besets the nuclear policy and practices of the Alliance," and specifically the divisive debate over the proposed deployment of the new intermediate-range missiles in Western Europe, that led them to back the idea of no-first-use. A no-first-use policy would, they believe, restore credibility to NATO's deterrent and is therefore a good idea on military grounds. But in their view, "The political coherence of the Alliance, especially in times of stress, is at least as important as the military strength required to maintain credible deterrence. Indeed the political requirement has, if anything, an even higher priority."

How does no-first-use measure up to that overriding political requirement? Perfectly, the American gang of four tells us: ". . . the value of a no-first-use policy . . . is first of all for the internal health of the Western Alliance itself." And so far as West Germany in particular is concerned, "A policy of no-first-use would not and should not imply an abandonment" of the American guarantee but "only its redefinition."

This complacent judgment by the American gang of four is not shared by an equally distinguished West German gang of four whose minds

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have been as wonderfully concentrated by the prospect of Soviet domination as have the minds of their clerical compatriots.* According to the Germans, not only would renunciation of first use fail to contribute to the "internal health of the Western Alliance itself," but it would have the opposite effect of increasing insecurity and fear. Nor do the Germans agree that no-first-use would mean nothing more than a "redefinition" of "the American protective guarantee" to Western Europe. As they see it, this "redefinition" would define the "present commitments of the United States" right out of existence.

In short, far from being the best means "for keeping the Alliance united and effective," the Germans assert that "the proposed no-first-use policy would destroy the confidence of Europeans and especially of Germans in the European-American Alliance as a community of risk, and would endanger the strategic unity of the Alliance and the security of Western Europe."

The Germans are right. NATO has relied on the threat of a nuclear response to deter not a nuclear attack on Western Europe but an invasion by *conventional* forces. The reason for this reliance on a nuclear response is that the conventional forces of NATO have never been large enough to repel a conventional Soviet invasion. Not being adequate to repel in actual combat, they are also inadequate to deter such an invasion. Therefore to renounce first use means renouncing deterrence of a conventional war; it is also to counsel surrender in the face of an inevitable defeat by decisively superior forces. (On this point the Germans do not diplomatically mince words: "The advice of the authors to renounce the use of nuclear weapons even in the face of pending conventional defeat of Western Europe is tantamount to suggesting that 'rather Red than dead' would be the only remaining option for those Europeans then still alive.")

THE only way around this trap is to create a Western conventional capability that would be a match for the conventional Soviet forces arrayed against Western Europe. With the rise of anti-nuclear sentiment in the last year or two, this solution has become more and more popular. Except for the American bishops, everyone, it seems, is now in favor of a conventional military build-up. Even critics of the "military-industrial complex" who have complained without let-up about the "bloated" military budget can nowadays be found paying their rhetorical respects to the need for larger and better conventional forces.

But the fact is that nuclear weapons are much cheaper than conventional forces; they give "more bang for a buck," in the phrase used during the Eisenhower years to justify a greater reliance on them in our overall military posture. How many of those both in the United States and Europe agitating against nuclear and for conventional weapons would be willing to spend the enormous sums that would be needed to build the requisite number of tanks and artillery and munitions? And what about the manpower? What about the draft that would have to be instituted in the United States and extended in Western Europe also at enormous financial cost (not to mention political unrest)?

There is reason, then, to doubt the sincerity of many of the pious genuflections before the newly fashionable idol of a conventional balance of power. But it is not the sincerity of the American gang of four that comes into question when they too pay their obeisances to the conventional defense of Europe; it is, rather, their intellectual and political seriousness. "It seems clear," they write, "that the nations of the Alliance together can provide whatever forces are needed, and within realistic budgetary constraints." Since no evidence is adduced to support this astonishing claim, one wonders why "it seems clear." It is not, at any rate, clear to everyone. According to one extremely optimistic assessment—a report by the European Security Study entitled "Strengthening Conventional Deterrence in Europe"—NATO conventional forces could be adequately upgraded through new technologies over a period of ten years at a cost of only an additional 1 percent above "the present NATO commitments [of an annual real growth of 3 percent in defense spending] if such commitments are sustained and extended beyond 1986." Yet even the optimistic authors of this report "recognize that political pressures generated by the current economic situation in the NATO countries make it difficult to achieve even the present NATO commitments."

As for the United States in particular, former Secretary of State Alexander Haig (who was once commander-in-chief of NATO) estimates that an adequate conventional defense would mean "tripling the armed forces, and putting the economy on a wartime footing." Possibly this estimate is too pessimistic. Even so, *half* of the entire military appropriation requested by the Reagan administration for this year will go to the conventional defense of Europe. Is it "clear" to anyone that more could be made available?

The only way around *this* trap is to envisage the additional burden being shouldered by the Europeans themselves. And that is precisely the objective of several proponents of no-first-use like Irving Kristol and Herman Kahn who are general-

* The four are Karl Kaiser, who directs the leading German research institute on foreign affairs; Georg Leber, a labor leader and a former Social Democratic Defense Minister; Alois Mertes, the parliamentary foreign-policy spokesman of the Christian Democrats; and Franz-Josef Schulze, a retired general who has served in various high positions in NATO. Like their American opponents in this debate, then, the Germans are a bipartisan group with much professional experience in foreign and defense policy.

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ly hawkish in their ideas about defense and whose espousal of no-first-use therefore comes as a surprise. But Kristol thinks that the dependence of Europe on the United States has sapped Europeans of the will to defend themselves. Therefore an American withdrawal in the form of a policy of no-first-use (coupled with the removal of American troops who would no longer be needed as a "tripwire") might shock the Europeans into doing whatever would be necessary to insure their own defense. Kahn, who differs from Kristol on the issue of withdrawing troops, agrees with him that no-first-use would have a salutary effect on the Europeans.

Both Kristol and Kahn admit, however, that the Europeans might well be shocked by this policy not into building an adequate defensive capability of their own but rather into collapsing before the intimidating military might of the Soviet Union. Kahn's vision of this possibility extends only to a neutralized Germany, but he thinks "we can live with that." Kristol foresees worse: appeasement leading to the Finlandization of Western Europe as a whole. But if this were to come about, it would in Kristol's stern opinion prove that the Europeans were "simply unworthy" of the liberties they enjoy (and, he adds, the same harsh judgment of "political decadence" would be passed by future historians on the United States as well if we in our turn were to refuse "the burden of large, expensive, conventional military establishments, so that we can meet our responsibilities without always and immediately raising the specter of nuclear disaster").

In any case, Kristol does not doubt that an American policy of no-first-use would put Western Europe at the mercy of the Soviet Union unless it were accompanied by a massive build-up of conventional military force. (Kahn adds the requirement of a credible strategy for fighting a limited nuclear war if the Soviets should use nuclear weapons first.) But there is little likelihood that a conventional build-up will be undertaken either by the Europeans or by the United States. If there is to be a barrier to Soviet domination of the West, it will have to continue taking the form of nuclear weapons. Kristol may be right in saying that this Western dependency on nuclear weapons should never have been allowed to develop. But it is hard to imagine democratic societies placing themselves in peacetime on the kind of permanent war footing that an adequate conventional defense would have required. It is harder still to imagine a future reversal of this situation with expensive welfare states now in place everywhere in the democratic world. To remove nuclear weapons from the picture, then, is for all practical purposes to give the Soviets a decisive edge.

IF A policy of no-first-use would do this in Europe, so too would a freeze (since it would prevent deployment of the intermediate-range Pershing 2's and cruise missiles needed to balance the Soviet SS-20's). That much is obvious. What is perhaps less obvious is that a freeze would give the Soviet Union a decisive edge not only over the Europeans but over the United States as well.

Proponents of the freeze all deny that the Soviet Union has achieved superiority over the United States in nuclear weaponry. Although most, if not indeed all, of them think that superiority is in any case a meaningless concept as applied to nuclear weapons, they still make a great and indignant point of insisting that a "rough parity" in strategic forces now exists between the two superpowers.

The Reagan administration does not agree. Its position is that the Soviets have an edge because their missiles are now sufficiently powerful and sufficiently accurate to take out our land-based ICBM's in a first strike, thus depriving us of the means to do anything other than attack their civilian population, after which they would still have enough left over to retaliate in kind against our cities. In our aging Minutemen we have no matching capability, and until that force of land-based ICBM's is modernized by the deployment of MX or some substitute like the smaller single-warhead "Midgetman," the Soviets will continue to enjoy an edge. It follows that the "window of vulnerability" is still open. A freeze would prevent us from closing it and hence would lock us into a position of strategic inferiority.*

Yet even if Reagan's critics were right in claiming that the window of vulnerability is a myth and that the nuclear balance is about equal, a freeze (even a mutual and verifiable freeze) would *still* lock the United States into a position of strategic inferiority. The reason, simply, is that with a freeze, Soviet superiority in conventional arms would become and remain the decisive factor in the overall balance of military power.

Unlike no-first-use, which would leave Western Europe open to a Soviet invasion (though this in itself would probably suffice to bring about a gradual political capitulation without any troops and tanks actually moving across the borders), the freeze would not expose the United States to any such threat. But—again, unless there were a massive conventional build-up, which, again, is unlikely—a freeze would signify the acquiescence of the

* It is widely asserted that the Scowcroft Commission appointed by Reagan to advise on the deployment and basing of the MX has exposed the "window of vulnerability" as a myth. But the Scowcroft Report does no such thing. It clearly acknowledges that our land-based ICBM's need to be modernized. It also acknowledges that they are vulnerable. Recognizing, however, that the only way to solve the problem of vulnerability in the short term—namely, the Carter scheme of movable multiple shelters (MPS)—had to be rejected because of "local political opposition," the Scowcroft Commission takes such comfort as it can find in the idea that the other legs of the strategic triad will temporarily compensate for this vulnerability until it is eventually cured by the substitution of smaller single-warhead missiles for the MX.

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United States in a balance of military power clearly favorable to the Soviet Union. This, in turn, would necessitate a very severe contraction of American commitments around the world. For our own defense, we would rely on "minimum deterrence"—that is, a presumably (though at best only temporarily) invulnerable force of submarines armed with nuclear weapons capable of devastating the Soviet Union in retaliation for an attack on the United States itself. The rest of the world we would leave to deal as best it could with the unchecked might of the Soviet Union. Soon enough, however, alone in a sea of Finlandized and Vichyized regimes, we too would find what John F. Kennedy called the "red tide" lapping at our political shores and inexorably eroding our independence and our liberty.

IV

THE isolationism that is implicit in the freeze movement, then, goes even farther than the isolationism hiding behind no-first-use. But even the freeze does not go so far as the variety of isolationism that has surfaced in the debate over Central America. If, historically, isolationism has meant American disengagement from Europe, it has also meant the determination to keep the Americas free of foreign influence. The Monroe Doctrine, indeed, was promulgated as the corollary to an isolationist foreign policy. Yet there is now a school of thought in Congress and the media which denies that the United States has the right to fight against the spread of Soviet influence even in the Americas.

Of course, it can be argued that the Monroe Doctrine has already been abrogated by the transformation of Cuba into a Soviet satellite, and that it is a little late to invoke it now in connection with El Salvador and Nicaragua. But the radical new isolationism which has appeared among us on this issue does not rest content even with the de-facto repeal of the Monroe Doctrine. In what is certainly one of the most bizarre pieces of legislation in the history of American foreign policy, the Congress of the United States has in effect demanded that we not only forget about the Monroe Doctrine but that we observe the Brezhnev Doctrine in its place. Under the Brezhnev Doctrine, once a country has become "socialist" (i.e., Communist) it must remain "socialist"; all "socialist" revolutions are to be considered irreversible. Congress evidently agrees. By enacting the Boland Amendment, which forbids the U.S. government to assist in overthrowing the "socialist" Sandinista regime, Congress has virtually written the Brezhnev Doctrine into American law.

But we are not yet done with the incredible perversity of the new isolationists on this issue. Not satisfied with turning the United States into the virtual enforcer of the Brezhnev Doctrine where Nicaragua is concerned, they are also doing their best to help the guerrillas in El Salvador get into power, despite the fact that these guerrillas are openly connected to the Soviet Union through Nicaragua and Cuba. In Congress and in the media, the new isolationists work to obstruct the giving of aid; they devote all their energies to attacking the elected government of El Salvador for its abuses of human rights; they ridicule the administration's judgment that these abuses are declining; and they loudly and persistently demand that the guerrillas be given a share of power.

Adding intellectual insult to political injury, they claim to be doing all this because they wish to *prevent* a Communist victory in El Salvador, and they wax righteous with anyone who suggests otherwise. Thus one Congressman who has participated in these various efforts has attacked UN Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick for observing that there are those in Congress "who would actually like to see the Marxist forces take power in El Salvador." "It is," declared the Congressman, "slander and McCarthyite nonsense to say that members of Congress want to see Marxism triumph, in El Salvador or anywhere else." In a similar vein, Senator Christopher Dodd of Connecticut, replying for the Democrats to the President's appeal for increased aid to El Salvador, began his assault on Reagan's speech by affirming his opposition to "the establishment of Marxist states in Central America."

These loud protestations are all very well, but if we ask what political views like those of Senator Dodd logically imply, we have to conclude that Ambassador Kirkpatrick's charge, far from being slanderous or McCarthyite, verges on the self-evident. For what outcome other than a Marxist victory in El Salvador can be expected from a policy that restricts military aid to the government while simultaneously hampering efforts to interdict the flow of arms to the guerrillas; that puts continual pressure on the government to institute wide-ranging reforms in the midst of a guerrilla war; and that insists that the government enter into some form of coalition with the Communist-dominated guerrilla forces? It is hard to think of a better recipe for a Marxist victory in El Salvador than this combination of policies.

DURING the Vietnam war those who advocated accommodation with the Vietcong were able to persuade themselves that the National Liberation Front was indigenous to South Vietnam rather than an instrument of the Communist regime in the north; that although it included Communists, it was not dominated by them; and that it was fighting against the oppressions and repressions of the Diem and Thieu regimes. We now know from Hanoi itself that all these claims were false and that those in the United States who believed them were deceived. Similarly with Castro's rebellion against the Batista regime in Cuba. Though we now know from Castro's own

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mouth that he was a Communist from the beginning, when at first he claimed to be a Jeffersonian Democrat almost everyone in the United States believed him.

Things are very different today. As Ambassador Kirkpatrick points out in an article in the Washington *Post*, "what distinguishes the current debate about military and economic aid for Central America from similar disputes about China, Cuba, Vietnam, and Nicaragua is that we have fewer illusions and more information." Hardly anyone claims any longer that the regime in Nicaragua is a coalition of different political groups whose objective is to create a pluralistic democracy there. The Sandinistas "are done with dissembling," and have by their candor "denied their international supporters the comforts of ambiguity." They openly proclaim, as one Sandinista leader puts it, that "We guide ourselves by the scientific doctrines of the Revolution, by Marxism-Leninism." They make no effort to hide their close association with Cuba, which has sent thousands of teachers, managers, and military advisers to help them move more smoothly toward a fully totalitarian society and to enlarge and strengthen an army which is already the most powerful in the region.

Nor are the Sandinistas connected to the Soviet Union only indirectly, through Cuba. Recently, the Soviets began building a new port on the strategically important Pacific coast of Nicaragua, with the ostensible purpose of servicing Soviet fishing boats. More recently still, a member of the Nicaraguan junta said that his government would consider installing Soviet nuclear missiles in Nicaragua if requested by Moscow to do so. No wonder one French observer thinks "we are headed for a slow-motion replay of the Cuban missile crisis."

In El Salvador, too, "the comforts of ambiguity" have largely disappeared. The elections of March 1982 in El Salvador, with their huge turnout despite threats of guerrilla reprisal, have made it hard to go on maintaining that the guerrillas enjoy great popular support at home, and the documentary evidence has made it more and more difficult to deny that they are (in Ambassador Kirkpatrick's words) "directed from command-control centers in Nicaragua, armed with Soviet-bloc arms delivered through Cuba and Nicaragua, bent on establishing in El Salvador the kind of one-party dictatorship linked to the Soviet Union that already exists in Nicaragua."

Beyond having every reason to know who the guerrillas are, those who advocate a "political solution" in the form of "power sharing" in El Salvador also have every reason to know what invariably happens to such arrangements. Nicaragua is only the most recent example of how a coalition in which Communists are included soon ceases to be a coalition and becomes a one-party regime.

Given all this, to say that the new isolationists would like to see a Marxist regime take over in El Salvador may be the only alternative to the truly slanderous charge that they are so stupid and so ignorant of history that they cannot understand the clear implication of what they say and do.

But why would anyone in Congress or anywhere else wish to see a Marxist regime take power in El Salvador? In the vast majority of instances, the answer obviously cannot be that they are Marxists themselves or that they are sympathetic to Communism. But nowadays it is not necessary to be either a Marxist or a Communist sympathizer in order to believe that Communism is the wave of the future, at least in the "Third World," and that to range oneself against it is to be on "the losing side." Thus Senator Dodd: "American dollars alone cannot buy military victory . . . in Central America. If we continue down that road, if we continue to ally ourselves with repression, we will not only deny our own most basic values, we will also find ourselves once again on the losing side."

One would never guess from these words that 68 percent of the dollars we have sent to El Salvador have gone to economic rather than military aid; that what we have allied ourselves with in El Salvador is a democratically elected government; that it is trying with some success both to carry social reform forward and to cut down on the murders and other horrors that always and everywhere accompany guerrilla war; that if the guerrillas came to power they would be far more repressive than the present government in El Salvador. Despite all this, Senator Dodd declares that we are standing against "the tide of history" instead of moving with it.

Outside the halls of Congress, among columnists, editorialists, and academics, the idea that a Communist victory is the inevitable wave of the future comes out even more clearly. How, asks Anthony Lewis of the New York *Times*, can a government as bad as the one in El Salvador "win a war, whatever aid it gets," against guerrilla forces "powerfully motivated by a desire to change a society long marked by brutality and exploitation?"

Again, one would never guess that the government in El Salvador has demonstrated in a free election that it enjoys vast popular support and that the grievances of the people have *not* led them to support the alternative represented by the guerrillas. Nor, when it comes to Nicaragua, does Lewis assume the invincibility of the powerfully motivated guerrillas fighting against a brutal and oppressive regime *there*. But of course, being against the Sandinistas, they must be unregenerate Somocistas (even though old leaders of the fight against Somoza are prominent among them); and being anti-Communists, they cannot be regarded as the inevitable victors in a struggle against a Communist regime.

But the most honest of all the statements yet

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published on these issues is by Seweryn Bialer, who directs the Research Institute on International Change at Columbia University. After declaring that "it is simply unrealistic to expect that American support for the Salvadoran government can prevent the insurrectionist forces from making significant advances—and perhaps even winning the war—in the next two years," Bialer goes on to conclude flatly that it is also "unrealistic for the United States to hope to defeat Communist—or potentially Communist—regimes in the region." Bialer knows this "from talks with representatives of the Salvadoran guerrillas, Sandinista leaders, and Cuban officials," who have assured him that they will win. He also knows from the same sources that the Nicaraguan guerrillas cannot be expected to "defeat the Sandinistas or prevent their evolution toward Communism." But of course he really knows it from the assumption he makes that the Salvadoran guerrillas are (to revert to Senator Dodd's telling image) moving with the tide of history while the Nicaraguan guerrillas are moving against it.

Besides believing that Communism is the wave of the future, the new isolationists evidently believe that Communist regimes are on the whole better for the people who live under them than the "corrupt" and "repressive" governments they replace. On this point, politicians are unable to speak with the same degree of candor as a columnist like Anthony Lewis or an organization like the American Friends Service Committee. Where El Salvador is concerned, although Lewis is under "no illusion that the guerrilla forces and their leaders are all noble democrats, believers in government under law," he nevertheless tells us that what they are fighting against is "brutality and exploitation." Now, only yesterday Lewis was railing against the brutality and exploitation of the Thieu regime in South Vietnam only to discover (if indeed he yet has) that it was a paradise compared with what the "powerfully motivated" Vietnamese Communists had in store for the people of South Vietnam. But this time he is sure it will be different. Though the Sandinistas "do indeed have human-rights violations on their record," Lewis says, "what has happened in Nicaragua in the last few years is pretty tame stuff compared to what has happened—and is still happening—in El Salvador." After all, only a hundred civilians have been killed in Nicaragua during the past few years as compared with more than 30,000 in El Salvador.

The Anthony Lewis who throws these figures around is the same Anthony Lewis who in writing first about the Christmas 1972 bombing of Hanoi and then about the Israeli invasion of Lebanon uncritically accepted false casualty statistics to discredit the United States in the former case and Israel in the latter. Here, at it once again, he fails to consider that the guerrillas must have been responsible for at least some portion of the 30,000 civilians killed in El Salvador. Nor does he notice that during the period in question the war in El Salvador was still raging while one phase of the war in Nicaragua was over and the next not yet really begun. Nor does it occur to him that the Sandinistas are now in the process of consolidating their power and extending their control with the ultimate objective of turning the country into a totalitarian society on the model of Cuba. Nor does he recognize that Castroism, like every other example of Communist rule the world has ever known, has brought nothing but political repression, economic misery, and cultural starvation. Nor does he take into account the fact that the young men of Cuba have been turned into the cannon fodder of Soviet imperialism in Africa. None of these things disturbs Lewis's belief that Nicaragua will be different.

Indeed, he and many others already detect signs that it is. Conditions, Lewis assures us, are better there than in El Salvador, and according to the national coordinator of the Human Rights Program of the American Friends Service Committee: "In many aspects of Nicaraguan life—nutrition, education, health care, and land reform—there have been tremendous improvements." Having sung this old familiar song whose strains have echoed in countless reports from Stalin's Russia, Mao's China, Ho's North Vietnam, and Castro's Cuba, this Quaker guardian of human rights acknowledges that there have been a few violations in Nicaragua. For these, however, he mainly blames not the government but "attempts to destabilize the government." Needless to say, he offers no such apology for the human-rights violations in El Salvador. There, he no doubt feels, the people will go on suffering until the inevitable arrival of the same blessings that the Sandinistas are now bringing to the people of Nicaragua and which would be more abundant still if not for "attempts to destabilize the government."

V

But even if a Communist victory were both inevitable and morally desirable as compared with the alternative in El Salvador, would it not still be a blow to the interests of the United States?

Not necessarily, says Seweryn Bialer. Admittedly the Sandinistas, like Castro before them and (although here Bialer is less forthright) the guerrillas in El Salvador after them, are bent on creating Communist states. Admittedly nothing the United States could have done, "neither 'carrots' nor 'sticks,' . . . could have prevented the Cuban evolution into a Communist state," and the same is true of Nicaragua and (presumably) El Salvador. However, Bialer believes, "a less bellicose policy toward Cuba might well have prevented it from becoming a satellite of the Soviet Union." Where Cuba is concerned, it is now too late: we have

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"probably missed the opportunity to separate what is authentically Cuban in the Cuban revolution from the influence of the Soviet Union in Havana." But elsewhere in Central America it is not yet too late: we still have a chance, through "a shrewder, more deft United States policy [to] prevent El Salvador and Nicaragua from moving into the Soviet orbit."

What we should do, according to this analysis, is coopt the Communist revolution in Central America. For "the only plausible way to prevent Soviet influence in the United States' own backyard" is to accept and even promote the spread of Communism in the United States' own backyard. Instead of making Central America safe for such brutal dictatorships as the one in Guatemala, which is how Bialer characterizes our present policy, we should—to put it more nakedly than Bialer himself does—be working to make the region safe for national Communism.

Never mind that there is no evidence for Bialer's assertion that Castro once was, or that the Sandinistas or the guerrillas in El Salvador now are, "interested not in Soviet goals but rather in . . . independence, social reform, and economic development." Never mind that Castro himself has given the lie to the idea that he was driven into the arms of the Soviet Union by a "bellicose" American policy (which in any case was not at all bellicose in the immediate aftermath of Castro's victory and only became so as he moved through his own revolutionary ardor into the Soviet camp). Never mind the simple fact that the United States not only helped in the end to topple the Somoza regime in Nicaragua after many years of supporting it, but initially welcomed the new regime in Nicaragua, sending it more economic aid in its first eighteen months in power than it had given to Somoza in the preceding twenty years. Never mind that as in the earlier case of Castro, these friendly relations with the Sandinistas turned sour as it became clear even to a sympathetic Carter administration that they were both failing to keep their democratic promises at home and also actively working with Soviet and Cuban help to promote a "revolution without frontiers" in El Salvador and elsewhere in the region. All these inconvenient truths to the contrary notwithstanding, Bialer and others can still assure us that all the Sandinista government cares about is "its own independence, social reform, and economic development."

Both Lewis and Bialer (among many other commentators) freely concede that the United States could prevent a Communist victory in El Salvador (and could reverse the Communist revolution in Nicaragua) if it sent its own troops in to do the job. But the not-so-hidden term in their analysis is that the United States will not and cannot intervene militarily in Central America. Bialer: "It is difficult if not impossible to imagine that Congress and the American public would agree to such a course." Lewis: "Public feeling against any dispatch of U.S. combat forces to El Salvador is so great that it is hard to see how any President could send them."

It is here that we arrive finally at the juncture where pacifism and isolationism—the two great shapers of the opposition to the 1980 consensus—meet and merge into a single mighty wave of appeasement.

OF COURSE, the term appeasement itself retains its pejorative ring—so much so that in what may well be the prize polemical trick of the age, one opponent of Reagan has tried to discredit him by pointing out that Neville Chamberlain, the great apostle of appeasement, was also anti-Soviet. But appeasement by any other name smells as rank, and the stench of it now pervades the American political atmosphere. It would indeed be astonishing if this were not the case, since appeasement (as the word itself reveals) is the natural offspring of pacifism and the policy most compatible with isolationism.

Those like Bialer who call for the appeasement of Communism in Central America tell us that this is "the only way to fight Soviet influence" in the region. But the spirit of appeasement does not always disguise itself as a clever tactic for opposing Soviet expansionism. More often it appears in the shape of a rush to apologize for or explain away or even justify every aggressive move the Soviet Union makes. Thus many of the same people who think that the United States has no right or is ill-advised to intervene in Central America against the spread of Communist regimes there are quick to defend (while of course piously deploring) the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan or the suppression of Solidarity in Poland on the ground that keeping friendly regimes in countries so close to its own borders is a legitimate security interest of the Soviet Union.

Similarly, many of the same people who oppose the proposed deployment in Europe of the new intermediate-range missiles are willing, nay eager, to justify the Soviet deployment of such missiles in Europe and to translate the sophistries of Moscow's case into terms that sound very reasonable to American ears. When, for example, Irving Kristol asked why the Soviets decided to deploy the SS-20's in Europe and arrived at the surely correct answer that they did so for the purposes of political intimidation, he was immediately countered by Raymond L. Garthoff of the Brookings Institution who came up with "a perfectly understandable Soviet military rationale for modernization, without resort to speculation on intentions for a first strike or political pressure."

The same impulse to deny or even cover up evidence of Soviet malevolence—and again by people, especially in the media, who leap at and magnify even the faintest indication of American wrongdoing—can be sniffed out in several other

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areas as well. Even before the attempted assassination of Pope John Paul II, there was a widespread refusal to credit the abundant evidence that the Soviets had been deeply involved in international terrorism. And then, even after the attempt, journalists who had never hesitated to convict the United States of outlandish charges merely on the basis of rumor, willfully blinded themselves for many months to the increasingly obvious conclusion that the Soviets were the guilty party. A comparable degree of skepticism has been manifested, and also for an extraordinarily long time, toward the evidence that the Soviets, in violation of the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972, had been using the poisonous chemicals known as "yellow rain" in Laos, Cambodia, and Afghanistan.

While many of the skeptics have finally been forced to come around on the assassination attempt and on "yellow rain," no such readiness to give up exonerating the Soviets has yet materialized on two other issues. One is Soviet involvement in Central America, for which an impossible standard of proof is demanded (again in contrast to how the United States is treated). The other is the issue of Soviet cheating on SALT. When President Reagan said recently that "There have been increasingly serious grounds for questioning [Soviet] compliance with the arms-control agreements that have already been signed," he was instantly denounced for what a New York *Times* editorial called "loose talk about Soviet cheating." Other commentators charged Reagan with hypocrisy: since he himself opposed ratification of SALT II, by what right did he accuse the Soviets of violating it?

In any event, said Tom Wicker of the New York *Times*, even though Reagan had promised "to refrain from actions which undercut SALT II so long as the Soviet Union shows equal restraint," he himself had made proposals that "numerous experts" considered violations of the treaty. To which one of these experts, a former arms-control official in the Carter administraton named William E. Jackson, Jr., added that it would not be surprising if Moscow had "long since concluded that the unratified [SALT II] treaty is a dead letter."

To sum up the Wicker-Jackson position: there is no conclusive proof that the Soviets actually violated SALT II, and even if there were, they would be justified in doing so by the way "the Reagan administration has trashed the very idea" of preserving SALT II and has "repeatedly denigrated the arms-control achievements of Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter."

IN THE PAST apologies for Soviet behavior usually arose out of love or admiration or sympathy. But that is not what we are dealing with here. The new species of apologetics comes not from Communists or fellow-travelers but from people who are so driven by the fear of Soviet power and so mesmerized by pacifist illusions that they will go to any lengths to persuade themselves and others that safety can be found in negotiations with the Soviet Union.

Sometimes this pretense is maintained by dismissing or denying realities like the size and scope of the Soviet military build-up and the aggressive political strategy that has accompanied it in violation of the promise implicit in the Basic Principles of Détente of 1972; or by dismissing or denying the evidence that the Soviets have certainly violated the 1972 treaty prohibiting the use of chemical weapons, and have almost certainly cheated on SALT I. Yet even when denial is made impossible by an avalanche of incontrovertible evidence, the very acknowledgment of these previously suppressed realities is usually accompanied by intensified affirmations of the need to pursue and reach agreements.

The best recent illustration of how fear begets pacifist illusions which then beget appeasement is a column entitled "Sarajevo and St. Peter's" by Flora Lewis of the New York *Times*. Miss Lewis here begins by quoting a British historian who had warned against pursuing the facts of the assassination attempt on the Pope because "the echo of a bullet at Sarajevo set off World War I." Miss Lewis disagrees. The facts, she says, "should not, and probably cannot, be stifled. History and Western dignity demand the truth." What then is the "warning" sounded by the horrible realization that "the line of responsibility leads directly to Moscow's KGB and to the man who was then its chief and is now the Soviet leader, Yuri Andropov"? Does this mean that agreements with such a man and such a nation are worthless? Not in the least, Miss Lewis tells us: "It means getting on with arms negotiations, engaging determinedly in a search for peace with an adversary too dangerous to defy or discount. The issue isn't mutual trust, it is everybody's survival in a world where dirty tricks are all too possible, and so is total disaster. The appropriate lesson of Sarajevo now is to face facts, and therefore plan for peace."

One can scarcely imagine a more vivid expression of the spirit of appeasement which has been bred by the resurgence of pacifism and isolationism in the past two years.

VI

IF THE opposition to the 1980 consensus on the Soviet threat and the need to take action against it is shaped by these elements (traveling, to repeat, under different names), what are its prospects for the future?

In trying to answer this question, the beginning of wisdom is to recognize that despite appearances to the contrary, we are not dealing here with a struggle that divides neatly along party lines. On the two main issues we have been examining—defense and Central America—the Democratic

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Jimmy Carter and the Republican Ronald Reagan have been surprisingly close. As I have already pointed out, it was Carter who cut off American aid to Nicaragua and sent money and military advisers to El Salvador; and it was also Carter who endorsed the MX, agreed to deploy the Pershing 2's and cruise missiles in Europe, and who withdrew SALT II because the votes for ratification could not be mustered in the (Democratically-controlled) Senate. Conversely, there are many Republicans in the House and Senate who are against or are lukewarm toward these same policies even when espoused by a President of their own party, and it is an open secret that many Democrats disagreed with Senator Dodd's attack on Reagan's speech about Central America. There are, then, Republicans in the opposition to the 1980 consensus and there are Democrats who remain part of that consensus.

Nor does the debate divide neatly along a liberal-conservative or Left-Right axis. The liberal New York *Times* opposes the freeze, while a conservative like former Secretary of the Treasury William E. Simon calls for cuts in the defense budget. A conservative like Irving Kristol supports withdrawal of American troops from Europe, while liberals like Morton Kondracke of the *New Republic* and Richard Holbrooke (formerly of the Carter State Department and *Foreign Policy* magazine) oppose withdrawal of American support from El Salvador.

There is hope in these crisscrossings and incoherent combinations. For if it is true that the opposition to the 1980 consensus on the Soviet threat was given an ideal chance to regroup and mobilize by Reagan's decision to pay more attention to the economy than to foreign policy, then the recent change in the balance of presidential attention might serve to restore the consensus to some approximation of its former bipartisan strength and confidence. The series of speeches Reagan has made in the past few months defending his policies on defense and Central America has already had an effect. The MX has survived a major congressional challenge, and Congress has also accepted a larger increase in defense spending than the opposition had not so long ago bargained for. On Central America, too, the opposition in Congress has been forced to back down. It has not (yet) succeeded in cutting off all aid to the Nicaraguan guerrillas or in forcing the government of El Salvador to submit to the demands of the guerrillas there.

On the other hand, Reagan has been forced to back down as well. To get the MX and other elements of his rearmament program, he has had to enter into an arms-control process which he once gave every indication of understanding to be a fraud and a trap; and he has also had to move more slowly and cautiously in Central America than he presumably would have wished.

REAGAN has been forced to act in these ways largely because the consensus that elected him has been frightened by the relentless pounding and the demagogic appeals of the opposition. Even so, the American people have not changed their minds about the seriousness of the Soviet threat. We know this from the fact that in all the polls large majorities say that they are very worried about it. But the influence of the opposition shows in the equally large majorities who place their hopes in arms-control negotiations and who are especially reluctant to send American troops to Central America. As a politician, Ronald Reagan, confronted by this twin reluctance, has been compelled to bend.

But those who still hold with the 1980 consensus on the Soviet threat, and who are not politicians, have no compelling need to bend. They are free to speak plainly, and they have a great responsibility to do so. They have a great responsibility to go on saying that the Soviet threat can only be successfully met by a policy of strength and resolve which will inevitably entail larger defense budgets and a continued reliance on nuclear weapons; that the hopes vested in arms control are delusory and dangerous, and serve mainly as a respectable cover for isolationism and appeasement; that we can deter a war with the Soviet Union only if we are prepared and willing if necessary to fight; that if the United States cannot prevent a Communist victory in El Salvador, it will stand revealed as a spent and impotent force; and that the United States must therefore do whatever may be required, up to and including the dispatch of American troops, to stop and then to reverse the totalitarian drift in Central America.

In short, they have a great responsibility to go on demonstrating that pacifism and isolationism in any guise and under any name can only give us a world fashioned in the image of the Soviet Union. I for one do not believe that the American people will cooperate knowingly in the emergence of such a world. And that is why I think the spirit of appeasement now hovering so heavily over the land can still be blown away by a renewed, persistent, and unembarrassed appeal to the realism, the sense of honor, and the patriotism that erupted after Iran and Afghanistan and then swept Ronald Reagan into office only two-and-a-half years ago.

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Misreadings of Anti-Semitism

Jacob Katz

"IT CAN be argued that the history of modern anti-Semitism belongs more properly to the realm of American and European historiography than Jewish. Anti-Semitism, after all, reflects stresses and strains in the larger societies in which Jews live and mirrors actual Jewish behavior only in a limited, distorted way."*

This passage from a review of my book, *From Prejudice to Destruction* (1980), is a good example of the more or less overt assumption underlying many contemporary treatments of European anti-Semitism. According to this assumption, only the Gentile role in anti-Semitism is worthy of the historian's attention, since Gentiles are the bearers of anti-Semitic prejudice, the producers of anti-Semitic ideology, and the instigators of anti-Semitic activity, while Jews are merely the passive victims.

There are other reasons too why modern historians, in their search for the causes of anti-Semitism, tend to focus on the Gentile environment. The simplest explanation is that historians know a good deal more about non-Jewish societies than about the Jews. So alien is the internal Jewish milieu to most of them that even the sufferings caused by anti-Semitism are hardly ever portrayed in a realistic or convincing manner. The Jews who appear in these accounts are shadowy and insubstantial figures, lacking not only initiative but any sign of ordinary human responsiveness.

But there is a more pressing reason for the negation of a Jewish role in the history of anti-Semitism which stems from a reaction to one of the central tenets of anti-Semitism itself. Anti-Semites of all persuasions have always maintained that their antagonism toward Jews is purely defensive, a way of guarding Gentile society against the dangers posed by Jewish beliefs, mores, dogmas, character traits. In their understandable eagerness to discredit these charges, and fearful lest they might otherwise seem to be endorsing anti-Semitic arguments, modern historians have tended simply to rule out the Jews altogether as a possible cause of anti-Jewish animosity. Rather, these scholars have felt compelled to explain the ongoing hatred and persecution of Jews exclusively in terms of developments within the anti-Semitic camp or in the larger non-Jewish environment. Generally speaking such explanations have tended to fall into three categories: the socio-political; the psychological, or more precisely the psychoanalytical; and the ideological.

The socio-political approach, which is the most common, ascribes the outbreak of anti-Semitism to social tensions prevailing within Gentile society in the wake of economic crisis and political upheaval. An early example of this approach is Eleanore Sterling's study of anti-Jewish outbreaks in post-Napoleonic Germany, culminating in 1819 in the "Hep! Hep!" riots. ("Hep! Hep!" was a derogatory rallying cry against the Jews.)†

According to Miss Sterling, the slow but steady dissolution of the old order in Germany in the wake of the Napoleonic wars and attendant political upheavals, along with changing economic conditions during this period, served to dislocate large numbers of people from their established social settings and to generate widespread discontent. These uprooted elements, coming from different sectors of society, became carriers of unrest, perpetually in search of an object upon which to vent their pent-up resentment. Jews, traditionally the least-protected group in society, provided a natural target for the accumulated tension. Borrowing a term from psychoanalytical theory, Miss Sterling calls this a "displacement" of social protest: the blows intended for those belonging to the ruling classes, who were the true culprits, were directed instead against the Jews.

Unfortunately, this theory fails to conform to the historical facts. For one thing, the segments of the

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* Todd M. Endelman, *Association for Jewish Studies Newsletter*, No. 22, Summer 1982, p. 11.

† "Anti-Jewish Riots in Germany in 1819: A Displacement of Social Protest," *Historia Judaica*, 19 (1950), pp. 105-142; and *Er ist wie Du* ("He is Like You"), a study of anti-Semitism in Germany from 1815 to 1850 (1956).

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population suspected of anti-establishment inclinations or activities were not at all associated with the anti-Jewish rioters but were drawn, rather, from the ranks of university students and other intellectuals and patriots. These rebels had fought in the war of liberation against Napoleon and had expected in its aftermath a united and democratic Germany. When, instead, Germany remained divided and faction-ridden under the old patriarchal regimes, they went underground and created clandestine cells which terrified the ruling authorities.

Far from belonging to this elite, the anti-Jewish rioters came from the mob and from the lower ranks of the population. In turning upon the Jews, they were responding (according to one contemporary historian) to incitements by the burgher class, which felt threatened by the entry of the Jews into its occupations during the Napoleonic period and wanted them returned to their previous ghetto status. And, indeed, the riots originated in cities like Würzburg, Frankfurt, and Hamburg where the problem of Jewish civil status was being passionately debated at that time.

In other words, contrary to Miss Sterling's thesis, there was a real conflict going on between the Jews and the Gentile environment during this period, though she chooses to close her eyes to it. In doing so, she reflects the influence of the Frankfurt School of social criticism and its director, Max Horkheimer, under whose guidance she did her research. The Frankfurt School, with its Marxist perspective, had not been notable for the accuracy of its evaluation of the Jewish situation either before the advent of Nazism or afterward. Miss Sterling, though writing in the early 50's, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, still could not understand why the integration of such a tiny group as the Jews should have aroused the resistance of the population. The reaction of the 1819 rioters appeared as incomprehensible to her as the onslaught of the Nazis on the Jews of their time. The reasons for both had to be located in the problems of Gentile society. Thus arose the theory of "displacement."

Miss Sterling's disregard of a Jewish factor in the 1819 riots is hardly the only instance of this approach. In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Hannah Arendt, referring to the anti-Semitism that culminated in the Dreyfus affair and that emerged simultaneously with a number of economic scandals in which French Jews were involved, writes that "these [Jewish] parasites upon a corrupt body served to provide a thoroughly decadent society with an exceedingly dangerous alibi. Since they were Jews it was possible to make scapegoats of them when public indignation had to be allayed."

The trouble with the scapegoat theory and related notions is not that they connect social tension with the outbreak of anti-Semitism. No one could quarrel with this, since it is obvious that in a state of absolute social equilibrium there would be no chance for even the most ingrained religious or racial prejudice to erupt into violence, or even to provoke animosity or active discrimination. But the mere fact of social tension is not sufficient to explain anti-Semitism. Tensions may provide an occasion without providing a cause. The question that still has to be answered is why crises within the larger society should be particularly harmful to *Jews*. This question the social theorists have not answered.

THE psychoanalytic approach has not fared any better, though analysts have been propounding theories of anti-Semitism ever since Freud. All these theories take as their point of departure the seeming inadequacy of available historical data to explain the nature of anti-Semitism or its persistence through the ages. Accordingly, the theories ascribe the phenomenon to invisible factors, primordial drives and impulses within the human unconscious, such as the Oedipus complex, the fear of castration, and others. Anti-Semitism, inexplicable in rational terms, is seen as an external reflection of concealed unconscious processes within the human species.

But this sort of theory is as irrefutable as it is undemonstrable. To a historian, the proof of a theory lies in its serviceability, that is, in the possibility it offers of providing a basis for explaining historical processes and reconstructing the course of events. To be useful in these terms, psychoanalysis should offer not only a formula for penetrating the hidden wellsprings of anti-Semitism, but also a guide to following its overt historical manifestations. It should be possible to write a history of anti-Semitism, or at least some coherent segment of it, in the light of psychoanalytic theory. But although psychoanalysts have come up with various suggestions about the unconscious drives or complexes that might dictate anti-Semitic behavior, and historians from time to time have applied one or another of these suggestions to the behavior of certain figures or groups, the psychoanalytic material in such treatments usually takes the form either of isolated anecdotes or artificially-imposed afterthoughts, and has seldom been integrated into the historical presentation.

An example of this disturbing lack of integration is Norman Cohn's well-known book, *Warrant for Genocide* (1967), a history of the delusion of Jewish world domination as exemplified in the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Up to the very last chapter, this book is a straightforward presentation of events in their historical sequence. Then, in the final chapter, entitled "A Case Study in Collective Psychopathology," Cohn offers a psychoanalytic interpretation of the events he has been describing: "The Jews as a collectivity are unconsciously seen both as the bad son, i.e., the rebel-

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lious son full of murderous wishes toward the father, and the bad father, i.e., the potential torturer, castrator, and killer of the son." But no attempt is made to integrate the two parts of the book. The factual historical narrative and the psychoanalytic interpretation proceed on two different levels, and it is impossible to say how they should be combined.

Recently, Cohn himself has acknowledged the speculative character of his theory, if in a curious way. In a revised edition of his book he omits the final chapter—not, however, because he no longer believes "that psychoanalytical hypotheses can throw light on such manifestly paranoid fantasies," but because he now finds his initial interpretation "somewhat primitive" in light of the "increasing sophistication of psychoanalytical thinking." In place of that initial interpretation he recommends the hypothesis contained in Saul Friedländer's French book, *Nazi Anti-Semitism: History of a Collective Psychosis*, where what Cohn attempted to say "has been said more adequately."

This is a strange procedure at best. If the bad-son, bad-father theory can be so easily exchanged for some other psychoanalytical hypothesis, then obviously it never rested on empirical foundations in the first place. Perhaps it arose out of the belief that psychoanalysis, the fount of all interpretative wisdom, *must* hold the key to the riddle of anti-Semitism as to everything else.

Nor does the Friedländer theory offered by Cohn as a substitute for his own seem any more illuminating than the original. Friedländer believes that Hitler and his followers shared an unconscious fantasy of the Jews as a germ which had to be eradicated. This fantasy, in his words, "led to a behavior of identification and purification (a combination well known to students of individual obsessions), whose final form was to be the physical elimination of the Jews, the 'Final Solution.'" Now the Nazis certainly did refer to Jews as parasites, insects, and indeed germs. As a general political procedure this kind of name-calling was aimed both at demonstrating the harmfulness of Jews and at justifying in advance a policy of drastic punitive action against them. Yet to infer from the use of such language a theory not just about Hitler's unconscious, but about the unconscious of all those who participated in the extermination of six million Jews, makes sense only if one accepts as axiomatic a psychoanalytic explanation of anti-Semitism, including its culmination in mass murder.

In any case, the observable historical facts do not support this interpretation. It has obviously been suggested by analogy with certain clinical case histories in which patients plagued by an obsession with germs evolve some ritual of purification. Yet what a difference between the two instances! A patient who imagines himself ridden with germs is not remotely like the Nazis who knew full well that in calling human beings germs, they were using the term figuratively. Nor is there any basis for comparison between the uncontrollable and compulsive but otherwise harmless ritual which is the patient's reaction to his obsession and the deliberate program of the Nazis who set out cold-bloodedly to murder their victims.

Yet the fact that such analogies are far-fetched does not seem to disturb those who interpret all human affairs in psychoanalytic terms. Where Nazism is concerned, the very disparity between stimulus and response, between the modest scale of the acutal conflict of Gentiles and Jews and the almost incomprehensible enormity of the anti-Jewish hatred it provoked, seems to provide even further impetus to hypotheses unanchored in any provable reality.

A THIRD school of thought about the rise of modern anti-Semitism, especially in its deadly Nazi version, takes as its starting point the sinister role played by racial ideology in modern social and political thinking. Most of the radical anti-Semites, though not all, did indeed claim that Jews were racially inferior, thus providing themselves with a justification for their program of social exclusion, legal discrimination, and, ultimately, physical extermination. Still, to attribute the murderous effects of anti-Semitism to racial thinking is like imputing the murderous effects of knives to their inventor.

The term "race" goes back to the 16th and 17th centuries and played a part in European thinking long before the Jews became a factor in the discussion. Even when, in the mid-19th century, Count Gobineau turned race into a central concept of historical interpretation, his formulas failed to yield any specific anti-Jewish animus. True, Gobineau distinguished between noble, culturally productive races and ignoble sterile ones, but though the Jews did not achieve the highest ranking in his racial hierarchy, they did attain a respectable position.

That the notion of race *per se* did not automatically imply a derogatory judgment is best indicated by the fact that Jewish thinkers and scholars did not hesitate to employ it. Moses Hess used the term, loosely defined, in his classic work, *Rome and Jerusalem* (1862), as did the Zionist thinker Arthur Ruppin two generations later in his attempt to delineate, in anthropological fashion, the fixed characteristics of a specifically Jewish "type" or mentality. With religion no longer serving as the binding definition of Jewish identity, those in search of other criteria gladly resorted to the term "race," using it in its positive sense though not unaware of its frequent misuse in anti-Semitic propaganda.

A curious episode from Ruppin's life is worth recalling in this connection. The German-born Ruppin, who had been living in Palestine since

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1908, came to Berlin on a visit in 1933 and was asked by one of the Zionist leaders to meet with the Nazi ideologue H.F.H. Günther, at that time the main exponent of the new regime's racial theory. The meeting took place in Günther's house in Jena. When it was over, Ruppin left under the impression that he and Günther had agreed that the Jews were different but not inferior, and hence the problem of the Jews in Hitler's Germany could be amicably resolved. Whether the Nazi was sincere in his remarks on that occasion or Ruppin was misled is not really all that important. What the episode reveals is that even so clear-sighted an observer as Arthur Ruppin could believe that racial thinking did not necessarily spell a destructive attitude toward Jews.

That the destructive tendency within German anti-Semitism did not hinge on racial theory and certainly not on the mere designation of the Jews as a "race" can be shown by examining the reverse side of the issue. The example of Paul de Lagarde demonstrates that anti-Semitism, even in its most radical version—unto the very negation of Jewish existence—could develop without the prop of racism. Lagarde, a prominent mid-19th-century Bible scholar and Orientalist, was also deeply involved in the issues agitating the Germany of his day. Critical of what he regarded as the materialistic bent of his generation, he saw a possible remedy in a national religious revival, but one that was to be not Christian but Germanic in character. Lagarde viewed Christianity, and especially its "Jewish" component, as a negative influence on German society and a hindrance to national spiritual reawakening. In the same vein, he also pronounced the Jewish presence in Germany intolerable, and did not mince words in drawing practical conclusions from his premises. More than half a century before Hitler, Lagarde's unrestrained anti-Jewish exhortations amounted to an appeal for the physical removal or destruction of all Jews living in Germany.

Intemperate and radically anti-Semitic though he was, Lagarde never used the word "race" or any of its variations. Nonetheless, the Nazis regarded him as one of their ideological forerunners, and his books and articles, along with those of the overtly racist Houston Stewart Chamberlain, were abundantly cited in Alfred Rosenberg's *The Myth of the 20th Century*, the semi-official compendium of Nazi ideology. The coupling of the two clearly indicates that it was not racial theory itself but the radical negation of Jewish existence —on any ground whatever—that fed the Nazi drive for the annihilation of Jewry.

In sum, the prevalence of the notion of race and even the ideology of racism built upon it cannot by itself account for the radical turn anti-Semitism took, especially in its last phase. Racial theory served the Nazis and their forerunners as a basis for arrogating to their own nation the highest position in the human hierarchy, and for subjugating other nations, enslaving large parts of their populations, and decimating their leadership. Yet for total extermination they singled out the Jews alone. Since racial theory obviously left room for all sorts of variations, there must be some other factor to account for the exceptionally severe consequences it entailed for Jews.

THIS specific factor is to be sought at the point in history where the alleged vices of the Jewish character began to be attributed to the Jewish racial heritage. The first instance of such an attribution occurs in the early writings of Ernst Renan in the 1850's. In the course of pursuing his linguistic studies, Renan innocently, so to speak, hit on a distinction between the Semitic and Aryan races. This distinction he proceeded to elaborate into a system which attributed all positive qualities to Aryans, and all negative ones to Semites. Though Renan did not refer to Jews in particular but only to Semites, the negative qualities he ascribed to the Semitic race turn out on examination to be the same ones Voltaire and the Deists had attributed to Jews a century earlier.

Voltaire and his predecessors had claimed to distill an analysis of Jewish character from a study of the Hebrew Bible and of Jewish law. Not surprisingly, however, the charges thereby leveled against Jews—moral insensitivity, acquisitiveness, xenophobia, and the like—had been circulating since the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora, though they had become more widespread and deeply ingrained during the Middle Ages. To these traditional charges the Deists added some new ones derived from their own particular set of values: superstition, irrationality, a lack of the social graces and of cultural productivity were all now said to be characteristic of Jews.

What the Deists viewed as the distinguishing traits of a collective Jewish mentality, Renan transformed into racially conditioned characteristics common to all Semites—knowing, of course, that the only relevant example was that of the Jews.

The idea of racial distinctions belongs to the intellectual equipment of the 19th century, serving linguists, anthropologists, historians, and other scholars as a tool for categorizing their observations and interpreting them in the light of this insight into human variability. As we have seen, Jewish thinkers had recourse to it as well. Was the pernicious use to which this intellectual tool was later put a necessary byproduct of the theory itself? There is no compelling reason to believe that it was. In fact, in modern European history there is no example of discrimination based on race prior to the recasting of traditional anti-Semitism into racial terms by the Nazis. It could therefore be argued that the notion of race, far from being

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the source of anti-Semitism, only acquired its force as a political weapon through contact with an already existing anti-Semitic tradition.

Racial thinking, however, is only one channel through which the negative evaluation of all things Jewish was transmitted. Indeed, its support was hardly needed when the very term "Jew" had for centuries been burdened by the most disparaging connotations, and even the defenders of Jews had not troubled to conceal their reservations about the supposed Jewish character. Thus, the liberal German historian, Theodor Mommsen, attempting to quell the anti-Semitic upsurges of the early 1880's in Germany, urged his compatriots not to quarrel with history for having infused 1 percent of the "Jewish element" into the German national substance.

Mommsen's appeal for tolerance by no means signified that he wished the Jewish element preserved as a way of adding variety to the German national character. On the contrary, like so many liberal well-wishers of the Jews, he expected them to be absorbed by the majority once they had divested themselves of their peculiarly Jewish qualities—qualities which were perceived not just as different or strange, but as inferior if not actually pernicious. That these qualities should disappear, and with them Jewish society, was part of the dream of the future.

THE predicament of emancipated Jewry, and ultimately the cause of its tragic end, was rooted not in one or another ideology but in the fact that Jewish Emancipation had been tacitly tied to an illusory expectation—the disappearance of the Jewish community of its own volition. When this failed to happen, and the Jews, despite Emancipation and acculturation, continued to be conspicuously evident, a certain uneasiness, not to say a sense of outright scandal, was experienced by Gentiles. The internal contradiction at the very heart of Jewish Emancipation —the granting of civil rights to a people, in the hope that they would disappear—began to exact its cost. If gaining civil rights meant an enormous improvement in Jewish prospects, at the same time it carried with it a precariously ill-defined status which was bound to elicit antagonism from the Gentile world.

Since the Middle Ages and until the Emancipation, the minimal living space granted to Jews, on the fringes of society, had been justified by the negative evaluation of Jews and Judaism in the Christian world. The Jewish situation had thus possessed a certain logic. But in the post-Emancipation period, anti-Jewish prejudices clashed head-on with the civil status the Jews had already attained, and the social integration they were hoping for.

Then, too, in the earlier period anti-Jewish charges had been part and parcel of an overall world view, openly acknowledged, and as such under the control of certain balancing forces. Christian teaching had condemned the Jews for their religious nonconformism and their real or fictitious shortcomings, yet at the same time it had found a rationale, in their anticipated conversion, for tolerating their existence. In the post-Emancipation period, by contrast, anti-Semitism was cut loose from its moorings. With the spread of rationalism, anti-Jewish sentiments lost their ideological grounding, but retained their elementary force. Without some secondary justification to support them in an increasingly secular milieu, they appeared to be nothing more than irrational outbursts of feeling. As a way out of this vacuum, anti-Semitism at the turn of the modern era showed a tendency to link up with any system of thought or set of ideas which seemed to offer ideological shelter.

The theory of race is actually only one example of such ideological fusion, though the most potent, and the weightiest in its consequences. In the same way, anti-Semitism in the post-Emancipation period became associated with a whole range of political philosophies—conservatism, which suspected all innovation and rejected the notion of Jewish inclusion in society on these grounds alone; socialism, which had always detested the traditional role of Jews under capitalist regimes; and even liberalism, to the extent that it came under the influence of a neo-Christian school of thought which denigrated Judaism as an obsolete remnant of tribalism, vastly inferior to the universalistic Christian ethical system which had superseded it.

MODERN anti-Semitism is thus a blend, and any proper history of it must consist of a careful tracing of the processes whereby vestigial anti-Jewish beliefs, dating back to the Middle Ages, were successfully combined with a whole variety of modern ideologies. Only by following the route along which the anti-Jewish tradition was transmitted through all its ideological fusions and transformations can we gain historical insight into the mechanism of anti-Semitism and the riddle of its survival through the ages.

The actual effect of anti-Semitism obviously changes according to circumstances. In assessing the phenomenon as a whole, the mental states of anti-Semites, insofar as they are penetrable, should be taken into consideration, as should the prevailing social and economic conditions, since on them may depend the relative dormancy or virulence of the anti-Semitic bacillus. But historians who focus exclusively on the personal traits of particular anti-Semites, or on the anti-Semitic personality in general, or on the social processes at work in a given situation, or on the psychoanalytic roots of anti-Jewish animosity, are not engaged in the proper work of their trade. What is more, by neg-

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lecting the developmental aspects of anti-Semitism as it has evolved over time, such historians end in effect by severing anti-Semitism from its connection with the Jewish people. In the interpretations of anti-Semitism produced from this standpoint, the fact that *Jews* were its victims becomes almost accidental.

The current tendency to de-Judaize anti-Semitism is most evident in the many recent attempts to universalize the culminating event of historical anti-Semitism—the Holocaust—by citing other examples of genocide and by pointing out that other groups also suffered at the hands of the Nazis. Up to a point, such comparisons are perfectly legitimate. Ultimately, however, the suffering of no other nation can compare with the uniqueness of the Jewish experience, and not just in the Nazi period. This is true not simply because of the amount of suffering entailed, but also because of its frightening recurrence over time, which lends it the character of utter inescapability. To close one's eyes to the peculiar, historically-conditioned Jewish fate is tantamount to ignoring its lesson for the present—the realization of Jewish vulnerability, which seems to be the unavoidable legacy of the Jewish past.

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How the Schools Were Ruined

Joseph Adelson

DURING the last quarter-century, American sentiments concerning education have fallen and risen and fallen. In the heart of that period, circa 1960 to 1975, we witnessed what can only be called a frenzy of exalted expectations for the prospects of schooling. The present mood, by contrast, is despondent, and I suspect more so than ever before in our history, certainly more so than in the memory of most of us. A great many feel that we are not merely coming down from a high, but that the high is itself to be blamed for the depths in which we now find ourselves—that the reforms of the late 1960's, undertaken thoughtlessly, giddily, produced the shallowness of learning and ennui of spirit we find so commonly in the schools.

The degree of disaffection amounts almost to disgust. The chancellor of a Southern university comments to the New York *Times* that "the quality of secondary education is just awful." The political philosopher Allen Bloom begins a powerful essay on higher education by writing that "students in our best universities do not believe in anything, and those universities are doing nothing about it, nor can they." A noted investment banker, interviewed on our country's loss of economic competitiveness, mentions almost offhandedly that an important part of the problem is our educational system. Jacques Barzun, one of our most distinguished academicians, in a new preface to his classic book, *Teacher in America*, says: "The once proud and efficient public-school system of the United States—especially its unique free high school for all—has turned into a wasteland where violence and vice share the time with ignorance and idleness." And as if to give all this an official seal of recognition, a bipartisan federal commission, concluding a two-year study of the schools, reported in April that "the educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity."

Part of us wants to believe that this is rhetorical excess, reflecting the disappointment of inflated hopes. Yet the data we now have on American school achievement tell us precisely the same thing. In a masterful analysis of these data, "American Education: How Are We Doing?" (*Public Interest*, Fall 1982), Barbara Lerner puts to rest any surviving complacency about our nation's educational system. Her article concentrates on two types of comparisons, historical and international. As to the former, she marshals evidence from a number of studies showing a substantial decline in the competence of American students during the last quarter-century, especially at the high-school level. The decline of SAT scores is by now so well known as to have become a journalistic cliché; but Mrs. Lerner points out that this key finding is corroborated by almost every other reliable study of the performance of American students then and now. The international comparisons are equally dispiriting. "Out of nineteen tests, we were never ranked first or second; we came in last three times and, if comparisons are limited to other developed nations only, the U.S. ranked at the bottom seven times."

The impression of widespread crime and violence in the schools receives similar empirical confirmation. The most recent large survey tells us that about 7 percent of all junior-high-school students report having been assaulted within the past month of the survey; a slightly higher number report having been robbed. Well over 10 percent of teachers report being victimized by thefts during that period.

The widespread disaffection with American schools is thus neither hyperbolic nor hysterical nor based on fancy, but is rooted in an accurate perception of what the schools—a great many of them—are like.

How shall we understand this apparent decline in both civility and competence? Is there some fault in the national temper? The economist Paul Samuelson believes we may be seeing a diminution of the American work ethic, as a response to more general economic changes in the country. There is a substantial body of opinion which holds that the country "has had it," especially with respect to economic innovation and productivity; a corollary hypothesis is that the slackness often seen in the schools reflects a more general failure of will. We have caught the "English dis-

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ease," so it is said, and are now experiencing that loss of energy which laid low Great Britain's economy. Economic enterprise, technical innovation, and intellectual drive must have behind them some stimulus to effort or to risk-taking; for various reasons, these motives have declined in force during the last quarter-century, and the schools have suffered accordingly.

Another version of this theme stresses cyclical variations, shifts from era to era in the emphasis placed on certain values. Daniel Bell has written of the "issue-attention cycle," referring to the waxing and waning of values over time. In an essay published in 1972 he noted that a decade earlier, "excellence" had been at the center of national concern, but that it had receded and had been replaced by "equality." A decade later, the wheel continues to turn, and we are seeing a renewed interest in excellence, and if not a dethronement of the rampant egalitarianism of a decade ago, at least some signs of a dialectic.

Whether one believes that long-range or short-range trends are at work, it is increasingly understood that the variables involved are ideological or, if you will, philosophical. One dubious American habit is to see our problems as concrete or "practical" and hence to search for technical solutions. That in fact has been a prominent feature of our thinking about the schools during the period in question. Now it has begun to dawn on us that at least some solutions are to be found in the realm of ideas and ideals, that we will be slow to recover past levels of achievement and decorum without giving some thought to transformations in the American sensibility. In what follows I will try to explore some ways in which "ideological" changes have influenced American education during the last twenty-five years.

II

ANYONE who spends any time at all in the schools soon realizes that a great many of those persons nominally in authority have a sense of having lost it.

The sense of lost authority is felt most strongly at the secondary-school level, and its effects are seen most clearly in the area of discipline. The extraordinary growth of litigiousness, and of litigation, has meant that school administrations—and ultimately teachers and principals—have become gun-shy, fearing that a wrong move can land them in the courts, or on the front pages of the local press. Much of the time, of course, that fear is exaggerated, but there are enough instances of gratuitous litigation to reinforce anyone's caution—or paranoia. In my own school district, for instance, a judge took it upon himself to overturn a standard disciplinary penalty meted out in a case of serious vandalism by a high-school student. That a case of this sort is taken to court, that a judge decides to accept it, and that he rules in favor of the defendant—all of that suggests a profound change in the atmosphere of education and in the authority of the schools.

In a recent article Gerald Grant has provided some illuminating—and depressing—reports stemming from his extensive survey of high schools. Some of his observations are worth quoting:

> Jurisdiction is so narrowly defined that a student who comes to a school principal after lunch complaining of being beaten up is asked which side of the street he was standing on when the beating occurred. If he was across the street, it would be out of the school's jurisdiction and hence of no concern to the principal. Often when students need help, teachers are afraid to intervene for fear of legal reprisals. One teacher, explaining why she hadn't interfered with a girl who clawed another in her classroom, said, "You'll only be after trouble if you physically handle them." Another teacher was still shaking as she told us about a group of students who had verbally assaulted her and made sexually degrading comments about her in the hall. When we asked why she didn't report the students, she responded, "Well, it wouldn't have done any good." "Why not?" we pressed. "I didn't have any witnesses," she replied.

These vignettes focus upon the helplessness of teachers, but we should also note the thuggishness of the students depicted. This loss of authority in the schools could not have come at a worse time for those deputed to run them. Many youngsters remained in the upper grades of high school who in an earlier era would have left; and among these a small but significant number were resentful and fractious. More important still, there was a rise in the number and proportion of anti-social adolescents—in fact, there was an astonishing increase in *all* indices of social pathology among the young during the last quarter-century, in assaults, suicides, homicides, drug use, out-of-wedlock pregnancy. There were also larger families, which meant a decrease in the number of intellectually able youngsters. Hence, in the postwar era, the schools confronted a horde of youngsters, a large percentage of whom were academically weak and/or anti-social. It was at that very moment that they found themselves stripped of their accustomed powers.

The weakened authority of teachers and principals also led to a weakening of academic demands. Teachers coping with unruly students could not give themselves fully to instruction; those coping unsuccessfully lost the esteem of all students. A demoralization often took hold which diminished the will to set and abide by high expectations. During the late 1960's a sense of impotence overcame many of those managing and teaching in the schools, producing in turn an inanition of the purpose necessary for sustained academic effort.

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In the universities, the crisis of authority did not so much involve discipline—except during moments of upheaval—as the erosion or collapse of academic standards. One hardly needs to belabor the matter, since the crisis in the universities was the most highly publicized set of events in education during the quarter-century we are considering. Academic faculties lost much of their control over curriculum, grading, intellectual standards, and above all the tacit definition of what the university ought to be. Those losses have not been made up.

One might argue, as Robert Nisbet and many others have done, that the faculties lost their authority because they did not have a strong definition of the university to begin with, that in particular the specifically pedagogical functions of higher education had been treated by many of them with derision or had at most been given lip-service. Hence there was an intellectual flaccidity, a confusion of inner purpose, which left the universities unable to defend themselves against the anti-intellectualism of the student movement. Be that as it may, the events of the late 1960's had as their primary effect—and perhaps as one of their latent purposes—a serious decline in intellectual quality.

The social sciences were the most grievously affected, in my view, especially those disciplines, such as psychology and sociology, which proved particularly attractive to the youngsters of the 1970's. Credit was given in courses where neither work nor attendance was required. In some cases instructors guaranteed an "A" grade to any student enrolling, as a protest either against the Vietnam war or merely against the competitiveness of academic life. Some courses in psychology became therapy groups, exercises in self-expression. In other instances the subject matter was entirely politicized; one of my sons, attending an Ivy League university, found that the introductory psychology course (and the only one given that year) consisted exclusively of denunciations of capitalism.

To be sure, these cases were in the minority, and the faculty as a whole, even in affected departments, did not participate or even approve. It was all seen as a kind of fever which could be left untreated, since it would ultimately run its course. The uninfected faculty thereupon retreated even further into research, or specialized graduate education, and withdrew even more decisively from the pedagogical missions of the university.

We now find that a blessed amnesia has begun to settle over us, and with it a tendency to minimize the impact of that period, on the ground that the consequences were limited. In fact, however, they were extensive, enduring, and have yet to be repaired. Consciously or otherwise, many teachers simply gave up requiring sustained effort from their students. In many instances this was done cynically, in others out of despair. Some teachers came to believe that the entire academic enterprise had been so compromised by the failure to resist student demands, that the game was no longer worth the candle. In other instances, a mood of manic zeal persuaded some teachers that they were living in a Golden Age of student achievement. College authorities told anyone who would listen that they were privileged to be teaching the most talented group of students the planet had ever seen; many students solemnly agreed.

That self-gratulation produced—or perhaps merely rationalized—the notorious grade inflation which dominated higher education, and which persists. Each year grade-point averages (GPA's) rose, ultimately to dizzying heights. In some universities the average GPA was at a level once reserved for the highest academic honors, and this forced a change in long-standing criteria for the awarding of such honors. One saw the same phenomenon, less concretely but far more vividly, in the letters of recommendation written by university teachers about students applying to graduate and professional schools. Where a few years before these letters had on the whole been positive but measured, they were now uniformly euphoric. One might read three such intoxicated letters regarding an applicant who could not compose a coherent complex sentence, and whose transcript showed that there had been no college-level instruction in mathematics or science or language or philosophy or history.

For this was the inevitable and inherent counterpart to the inflation of grades: a devalued curriculum and debased standards of achievement. There was a general retreat from required courses, or sequences of courses, and from the ideal of a general liberal education. What was most troubling was that the liberalization of the curriculum seemed to have nothing behind it, aside from the pious notion that coercion deadens enthusiasm which in turn inhibits learning. Those in favor of a core curriculum seemed too disheartened or confused to argue their case persuasively. Perhaps the most depressing experience I can remember from that period was listening to a general faculty discussion on whether we ought to institute a new bachelor's degree, the only purpose of which seemed to be to enable some students to escape requirements they found noxious, especially languages. Listening to that listless discussion made it clear that many of the faculty could no longer "remember the answers" (in Nathan Glazer's phrase), that the vision of a liberal education had been eclipsed.

The colleges not only offered junk courses of their own, but by lowering admission standards, they encouraged high schools to use junk courses

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for admission to the university. Or was it the other way around? Each, in any event, pulled the other down, and despite some grumbling here and there, neither objected too vehemently to the pulling down. In all likelihood, both secondary and higher education were being responsive to the same obscure but compelling forces in American life, a peculiar mixture of inflated self-esteem on the one hand and exhaustion of will on the other.

III

THE American zeal for education also provides the energy for programs of innovation and reform. It is hard, indeed, to think of another country where so many proposals are put forward for the improvement of schooling.

The zest for reform was evident throughout the postwar period and, as always, reflected larger social and ideological preoccupations. The Conant Report of 1948 was one of the most influential documents in this century's history of education, in helping to establish the normative idea of a consolidated high school able to offer all students an abundance of opportunities. A second landmark event was the Sputnik "crisis," which led to substantial improvements in the scientific curricula, and an infusion of federal money into mathematics, science, and technological education.

These were establishment ventures, whose intention was to strengthen the existing system rather than to overturn it. In no sense were the aims utopian; they were within reach, given sufficient energy and effort. In both cases the goals were readily achieved, and became an enduring part of the American pattern of education.

The movements for reform which succeeded these—let us place them in time from about 1960 to about 1975—are not so briskly characterized, since they have moved in many different directions. But they can be discussed under two general categories, which we will call "technological" and "liberationist."

The technological category encompassed a wide variety of proposals, some narrow, some quite far-reaching, wherein we found some effort to manipulate the materials or specific processes of learning. The simplest examples involved exploiting for the classroom technical devices originally developed for other purposes. The use of cassette tapes for language and other instruction was one obvious example, as was the use of closed-circuit television in the classroom. In most instances these techniques were meant to hasten learning or extend it, but did not aim at any radical transformation of the teaching process. Although their introduction was often announced by inventors and early enthusiasts as "revolutionary," they generally survived as ancillary methods woven into the quotidian activities of the classroom.

There were other modes of technology which were—potentially—more ambitious and even radical in intention. The microcomputer was one such device, in that it might have the capacity to transform the very processes of learning, though whether it would do so remained to be seen. Another "technological" approach was programmed learning, through the systematic use of reinforcers (*à la* Skinner), and its close cousin, "contract teaching." Though neither of these necessarily involved mechanical or electronic devices, their aim was to rearrange and rationalize the learning process itself, basing themselves upon a technology of response acquisition.

The Skinnerian and other behavioral approaches to education were at their inception utopian, promising not merely the transformation of the classroom, but a remaking of human behavior in society itself. These approaches, however, proved themselves adaptable, in that they could be borrowed from piecemeal. It is my impression that the Skinnerian emphasis these days is seen in a more deliberate effort on the part of classroom teachers to reward students, both in general and as they acquire specific skills.

It was the second direction of reform—the liberationist—which had the more profound initial impact on education. These movements defined themselves as radical. They saw a major aim of education as the undoing of the constraints imposed by excessive socialization. They believed that conventional child-rearing chained the "true self," and with it creativity and the capacity to learn easily and joyously. Conventional education then reinforced that enchainment; it merely completed what traditional child-rearing had left undone. Liberationist writing posited—at times merely implied—a "true self" which was essentially virtuous; and it was this optimism about human nature, this tacit denial of original sin, which was part of its attraction in an era marked by political utopianism.

Liberationist writing was a bold attempt to redefine the purpose and practice of education, in part by redefinitions of human psychology. The student was to be seen not as recalcitrant, but as avid (under the correct circumstances) and the teacher was to be seen not as a drill master so much as a partner or inspirational leader. Subject matter was to take second place to the perfection of the self—the cultivation of sensitivity, creativity, and the like.

Revolutionary movements tend to be both totalistic and sectarian. That is, on the one hand they aim to produce conversion, to enlist others totally in the cause, and on the other hand a sense of exclusivity develops within the movement itself. For these reasons, the new progressivism did not take over American schooling; far from it. It proved to be self-limiting. In those few communities where it enjoyed a large constituency, there

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might be some effort to satisfy it by offering special programs, or by setting aside one or two special schools. But it rarely went beyond that, since the more radical the program proposed, the more certain there was to be community resistance.

Yet the liberationist movements were hardly without effect; to the contrary, they were deeply influential. They were able to give credence and respectability to the idea that the cultivation of "the total personality" was as important a goal as the acquisition of subject matter and of cognitive skills. Hence it became easier to establish course work on such topics as "family living" and "personal adjustment" in lieu of conventional offerings in history and the social sciences.

BY FAR the major impact of liberationism had to do with the adversary stance it took to the existing system of public education, and to those who taught and managed that system. The messages of the movement were these: the schools were extremely dull places for the young; teachers were rigid and unimaginative, and could not engage the enthusiasm of their students; the secondary schools had as their essential but unspoken assumption keeping youngsters out of the labor market; hence they functioned as prisons, in that they contained an energetic population resentful of its confinement.

Yet even this fairly blunt paraphrase does not quite capture the contempt expressed toward schools and schoolteachers. One has to reread these writings to recall the tonalities (here again I think most of us suffer from some amnesia). The depiction of the ordinary school and the ordinary teacher was supercilious and at times scurrilous: these were held to be mean-spirited people servicing mean institutions. If the writer was himself a teacher often he would offer himself as exemplary, though of course with the usual *moues* of humility or self-irony. The author's students were said to learn more, to be more creative, to be suffused with the joy of learning, and to love their teacher almost beyond words.

These writers were generally young and viewed themselves as mavericks. But precisely the same attitudes could be seen in establishment figures such as Charles Silberman who, in an extremely influential book, *Crisis in the Classroom* (1970), took a position which Barbara Lerner quite correctly later characterized as extremist in rhetoric and messianic in claims.

When the liberationist movement was in full flower, the climate of the times was such that its diagnoses of American education proved persuasive to elite opinion, soon found their way into the mass media, became conventional wisdom, and ultimately were enshrined in the teaching of the schools of education. There was little countervailing argument. If you look through the holdings of a good public library, or a good used bookstore, you will find, abundantly, books by Silberman, John Holt, Herbert Kohl, Jonathan Kozol, Edgar Z. Friedenberg, Paul Goodman, James Herndon, George Leonard. You will find hardly anything from that era by writers representing a contrary position. If you survey the journals of opinion of that time, you find little attention given to problems of primary and secondary education, and the little there is, is sympathetic to the "reform" outlook. Most such journals limited their attention to the universities, or to the political problems in the primary and secondary schools, especially integration and busing.*

This disdainful depiction of the American schoolteacher did grievous damage to the self-esteem of many who were already uncertain about themselves and their value—a group which was not seen as "professional," or as "intellectual," or as successful in worldly terms. That loss of self-regard made it especially difficult for them to demand a disciplined effort from their students. Being portrayed as drones or jailers made many yearn to be seen as the opposite, as charismatic figures or laid-back adolescents. Young teachers in particular were tempted to embrace and exemplify the new values, and to serve as role models for advanced thinking. Here is a report by Fred Bloom, a young psychiatrist living in rural Maine:

> A teacher, a woman with twenty years' teaching experience, resigned recently from the new community school in our town because she was expected to go on the "team" weekend encounter of the social-studies faculty. On the weekend, she told me, the faculty members play therapy games. Among other games, they lie on the ground and roll back and forth over one another's bodies to develop "closeness" and "trust" among the team. "I went on it last year," she said, "and besides, I can't see why, after twenty years, I have to be shown how to get along. But really, you can't get along at that school unless you go in for that kind of thing."

The liberationist movement has lost influence, at least for the moment. One suspects its success would not be repeated today—not only because of obvious changes in the political climate, but also because we would now insist that some evidence be provided for its claims. Instead, a whole new body of empirical literature has shown how much truth there is in the beliefs which the liberationist writers opposed—that learning tends to flourish in schools governed by a strong and unified leadership, that it requires an orderly environment, that mastery of a subject is in large part a function of the time spent in learning it, and that

* *Daedalus*, for example, published over a hundred articles on higher education during the last quarter-century, but until last year only a handful about the schools. The shining exception is the *Public Interest*, which has published a steady stream of excellent articles by the most distinguished American writers on education.

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homework is important. All of these findings are "new" in that they are quite recent, but they coincide, of course, with beliefs that are quite old, not to say commonplace.

As it happens, we did know and do know many of the answers, even if we did not remember them and even if it remains unclear whether we will be able to put into practice what we know. But we were led away from these rather trite truths by the dominant intellectual writings of the 1960's. One movement of reform was, as we have seen, overly preoccupied with technique. The other movement did not see the school for what it was, or what it might realistically become, but as a simulacrum of a despised society. Both these approaches elided what we now see as central to sustained academic achievement—the internal morale marked by effort, drive, and persistence supported by purposeful leadership. Although both positions are now in some decline, they are by no means eclipsed. They draw upon two of the deepest and most enduring themes in American thinking—the love of technique and the idea of perfectibility—and one can expect that sooner or later, in one form or another, and for better or worse, they will once again be felt in the American theory of education.

IV

"EQUALITY" has been so obsessive a theme during the postwar era that we are liable to think of it as a permanent feature of our political landscape. Yet it has been a central issue—politically and intellectually—only at certain moments of our history. It gained vigor and attention in the 1950's, with the explosive growth of the civil-rights movement. During that period, equality came to mean racial equality—the end of systematic discrimination against blacks, particularly in the areas of electoral rights, in schools, and public facilities. These struggles having been won, indeed with surprising ease, the quest for equality moved ahead, toward the achievement of equal opportunity in such areas as housing and work, and to the extension of equality to other putatively disadvantaged groups, primarily women.

These extensions of equality enjoyed widespread and enthusiastic assent, certainly among the educated and among political liberals. But in the late 1960's we began to see not so much an extension as a transformation of the earlier idea of equality. Though that transformation drew upon some of the most ancient utopian ideals, it represented a startling new departure in the American political context and generated a bitter and continuing struggle among intellectuals.

The earlier notion of equality of opportunity involved what the late Charles Frankel termed "corrective egalitarianism"—the idea that a primary aim of social policy was to remove or modify those circumstances that disadvantaged some classes of citizens. That mode gave way to what Frankel called "redemptive egalitarianism." Whereas in the earlier understanding, one sought to give each player a more or less equal chance to succeed, in the newest conception, the fact of inequality itself was seen as unjust, in that it derived from external circumstances that favored one player over another, or from the presence of internal qualities—intelligence and drive—which the player had not "earned," or because it was itself capricious, the result of good luck and little more. That being the case, one could not say that a given person was morally more deserving of good fortune than another; and *that* being the case, the aim of social policy should be to minimize differences in fortune or privilege stemming from differences in achievement. The shorthand formula is now familiar: from equality of opportunity to equality of result.

The new position on equality was stated elegantly in one of the few philosophical books of our era to become famous, John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971), which was—as all commentators have agreed—a book of remarkable originality. As Frankel said, the author's purpose—"which is nothing less than to overturn two centuries of empirical, utilitarian, and positivistic philosophies"—was "breathtaking." Yet the popularity of the book among the educated, the quickness with which it seized the attention of intellectuals, had less to do with its originality than with the way it centered upon the ideal of equality. In a long and withering critique of the book, Robert Nisbet argued that the "passion for equality, first vivid at the time of the Puritan revolution, has been the essential mark of every major revolution in the West" and has in particular been the "mainspring of radicalism." Hence in an era such as the late 1960's, in which a great many intellectuals deemed themselves revolutionary, one might have expected that a book celebrating a revolutionary idea of equality should itself become celebrated.

Rawls's new doctrine did not long escape scrutiny. By drawing such considerable attention, it evoked almost immediately some brilliant displays of contra-egalitarian writing, the best known being Robert Nozick's prize-winning *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) which, roughly speaking, did for libertarianism what Rawls had done for egalitarianism. However, the main thrust of the response to Rawls came not from the libertarian movement but from the intellectuals commonly categorized as neoconservative, those associated with COMMENTARY and the *Public Interest*—Daniel Bell, Irving Kristol, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Charles Frankel, Robert Nisbet, to mention only a few. The major intellectual debate of the early 1970's pitted these writers against the egalitarians. The issues debated were pivotal in the

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fission between intellectuals in the postwar era, entirely comparable in gravity and scope to the debate about the cold war in the late 1940's. And as we might expect, the debate about equality involved, as a leading issue, a fierce argument about education.

In the traditional understanding of equality, it was posited that economic and other disadvantages acted to constrain the appearance and expression of talent. Jefferson's "natural aristocrats," ordinarily lost to the world by the accidents of privation, were to be uncovered by universal education. Schooling for all was to serve two aims—raising the level of literacy and competence in the general population, and bringing into cultivation those talents that would otherwise have lain fallow. The infusion of federal money into higher education after World War II served both goals: college training was made available to large numbers of young men, and an elite education was offered to those who qualified by virtue of intellectual merit.

Soon after the war ended, the prestigious private colleges and universities began to give up the exclusion of students by religion, ethnicity, and social background. Much the same happened at the graduate and professional level and in the recruitment of college faculty. That change took place quickly and for the most part silently—without litigation, protest, or government intervention, as though an agreement had been arrived at tacitly, based on a sense of social justice and a reckoning of the nation's needs. The example of Nazi Germany was a sufficient warning of the long-range effects of social bigotry. And beyond that, the country became aware—as did other nations—that its technical progress would depend upon the cultivation of intelligence, and that the great universities could no longer be enclaves restricted by class and caste.

The effect of that tacit decision was to open the great universities to groups previously excluded or restricted—the Jews most visibly, but also that majority of the American population which had not been so much excluded as discouraged. Access was determined by accomplishment rather than by membership in favored social groups; and accomplishment (or its potential) was determined by objective and universalistic means.

The opening of our universities proved to be a major reason for the extraordinary vitality which marked American intellectual, scientific, and artistic life during the postwar period. This country achieved leadership in many of the arts and humanities, and in almost all of the natural and social sciences. It did so, much of the time, by a seemingly effortless succession of European émigrés by native talent. And if we look closely at our indigenous "second generation" of extraordinary achievement—Nobel laureates, for example—we find that it is made up in significant degree of the previously excluded and discouraged, the ethnics and provincials.

Nevertheless, the hegemony of merit proved to be surprisingly brief. Not that it was abandoned—it is hard to imagine that happening entirely in any technological society, or for any length of time. Yet it did lose its primacy, that unspoken assent previously given by all significant strata of the society. The term "meritocracy" soon became current—a term used pejoratively, or dismissively, certainly without much loving-kindness. The meritocracy, it was implied, was composed not of the meritorious but of those who had the knack of taking tests, or making the right moves in school, or ingratiating themselves with selection committees. Furthermore, the tests themselves were suspect, in that there was said to be no clear relationship between doing well on them and doing well later in life. Nor was there much relationship between doing well in school and later success. Perhaps success was a matter of luck, no more than a roll of the dice. The idea that social mobility was fortuitous was the theme of one of the most influential books of the period, Christopher Jencks's *Inequality* (1973).

These critiques might not have had so powerful an influence had it not been for race. What would otherwise have remained an argument about social class and social mobility became an argument about race, and in the process it inherited our country's complex historical legacy of racial division and bitterness. The conflation produced, among many other things, a fierce attack on intelligence testing, largely because of the false assumption that most psychometricians held blacks to be genetically inferior in intelligence. Hostility to IQ testing—much of it ignorant, or uninformed, or based on the inflation of half-truths—was then generalized to other forms of aptitude and achievement testing. That hostility soon extended to the very idea of intelligence as a measurable attribute.

A dogmatic environmentalism came to dominate most discourse on these matters among social scientists, and among much of the educated public. Differences among individuals, especially in capacity, were held to be due to socialization alone, unless proved otherwise—and the conditions for proving otherwise were essentially impossible to meet. With the passage of time, the rhetorical ante was raised, and the arguments for equality became ever more shrill. The elegant moral reasoning of a Rawls and the intricate analyses of a Jencks gave way to the vulgarity of William Ryan's *Equality* (1981), which held that measured variations in intelligence were a scam devised by the "very rich" to swindle the rest of us.

It was a climate in which the idea of merit could not survive, at least not the belief that native gifts, cultivated by learning and effort,

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would produce achievement and reward, the fruits of which would ultimately add to the common good. Instead the following propositions became commonplace: Achievement has little to do with talent, or with effort, or with schooling. Differences in ability are a fiction, or are not measurable, or are a kind of confidence trick. The ruling class makes sure that the system is rigged to protect its own kind. The gifted can take care of themselves, or are in any case not worthy of admiration or special attention. There is no reason to stress cognitive skills over all others, since to do so is a bourgeois prejudice; it takes as much intelligence to survive on the street as to solve quadratic equations.

These propositions were not often stated quite so crudely, but stated they were, and they helped establish a moral and intellectual ambience in which striving, self-discipline, and the intellectual life itself came to be devalued. That in turn produced a loss of morale which was to diminish the moral energy of the public schools.

V

BEGINNING in the middle 1960's, a great many parents became aware that something was going awry in the schools. Those with children in the middle or high schools could recognize symptoms of demoralization and loss of purpose: that drugs were sold openly and that school authorities were not doing much about it; that courses in math, science, and languages were disappearing; that students were rarely asked to write, and were given little work to bring home. Parents also began to feel that they could not get their concerns acted upon. On issues of discipline, the school principal might say that his hands were tied because of new developments in the law, or because the schools were wary of litigation. On the issue of a softened curriculum, he might point to changes in college entrance requirements, or utter pieties about bringing education up to date and keeping it in tune with the times, leading the parents to feel that they were back numbers. Or the principal might agree wholeheartedly, but then go on to say that things were not what they once were, that students were less manageable, less motivated, and that many families had become indifferent to the academic progress of their children.

That parents, and the general public, were becoming disenchanted with the quality of public education was evident from trend statistics collected by the Roper Organization during the last quarter-century.* These showed a striking loss of confidence in the local schools during the period we are considering. In 1959, 64 percent of Americans felt that public education was doing an excellent or good job. That figure declined to 48 percent by 1978. Most of the drop took place between 1967 and 1971, when the proportion giving a favorable rating declined by eleven points, from 61 to 50 percent. We can infer what may have been involved in that loss of confidence from the Gallup figures on discipline in the schools. Those believing that the schools were too lax jumped from 39 percent in 1969 to an extraordinary 84 percent in 1978—about as close to unanimity as anyone ever achieves in opinion polling. That conclusion received distinct support from the potential targets of disciplinary toughness—the high-school students themselves, a majority of whom reported the following as "big problems": classroom disturbances (64 percent), marijuana use (60 percent), theft (56 percent), and vandalism (52 percent).

The remedies proposed for the schools also showed some startling changes. There was a sharp increase in sentiment for a greater amount of homework for high-school students, from 39 percent in 1965 to 63 percent in 1978. Many students themselves agreed: 48 percent thought the work was not hard enough, contrasted with 23 percent who believed it was too hard. Finally there was a striking jump in the number favoring competence testing: from 50 percent of the general public in 1965 to 82 percent in 1978. Once again, the students agreed. In 1977, 65 percent favored a standard examination to earn the diploma, as against 35 percent who were opposed.

These findings offered compelling testimony that the public disaffection with the schools had been felt for well over a decade, and that there was nothing whimsical about it: it had been responsive to the actual vicissitudes of American schooling, specifically the easing of both academic and disciplinary demands. But what was most striking was the extraordinary cleavage between public and elite opinion on the schools. It was during the late 1960's that a sharp decline in public confidence began showing up; and that was precisely when liberationist writing had come to dominate elite attitudes and then the media and ultimately educational practice. By the early 1970's, the public attitude had become cynical when not altogether hostile—the schools had been turned into a playpen, at times a dangerous one, where little serious learning took place. Yet these perceptions were either ignored or rejected by vanguard opinion.

In one form or another that cleavage continues —it is one of the most striking aspects of American education today that there is so little agreement among professional educators (the public is another matter) on what is wrong with the schools, how it came about, and what if anything ought

* The statistics that follow are taken from the invaluable summaries published by *Public Opinion* magazine (August/September 1979, February/March 1980 and October/November 1981).

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to be done about it. The public's sourness about local schooling—now beginning to change, though rather slowly—is simply not shared by a great many experts in education, who may agree that there has been a decline in quality, but take it in stride, seeing it as the price to be paid for universal education.

Nor is it the question of quality alone that divides opinion. Shall we teach morality in the schools, and if so, how? The struggle over "values clarification" between some teachers and some parents has turned on the claim of the latter that under the pretext of teaching children *how* to think about moral issues, a program of moral relativism has in fact been inserted into the curriculum. The occasional disputes about sex education provide another example. Though the opinion polls show that most people—even those calling themselves conservative—approve of the idea of teaching youngsters about sexuality, a great many parents become uneasy or opposed if they believe that more than information is being conveyed, that social attitudes they find offensive are being taught as well.

These disputes are by no means new to the schools, which have always been an arena for the playing out of arguments about values and ideologies. Nevertheless, the quarrels now seem more intense than before, and seem to involve a larger range of issues. We may well have seen, since the middle 1960's, some loss of consensus on the functions of the schools, and on the values they are meant to embody and teach. If so, that loss of consensus would have to do with a widespread shift in values among the population at large, from "materialist" to "post-materialist."

Portents of that change have been described by social theorists for many years, from David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) to Daniel Bell's *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973). More recently support has come in a variety of studies, most significantly Ronald Inglehart's *The Silent Revolution* (1977), which presents data from most of the industrialized countries of the West.

As these nations advance into a more affluent phase, one less dominated by economic survival and fears of scarcity, material values lose their hold over large segments of the citizenry—especially those cohorts which are young and have enjoyed higher education—and are replaced by a greater emphasis upon aesthetic, intellectual, and communitarian values. It is a trend visible in all developed societies, and most striking in the most prosperous of them—Belgium, the U.S., and Switzerland. Certain political movements—environmentalism, for example, both here and abroad—can be understood fully only if we keep in mind the more general changes in sensibility they rest upon.

Of course it is not at all clear whether this shift in values will survive the moment, or, more precisely, will survive the current worldwide economic recession. Certainly some of the more flamboyant claims made for a new level of consciousness, as by Herbert Marcuse and Charles Reich, now seem—to put it generously—overstated. Nevertheless, it is quite evident that the emergence of these new values—transient or not, deeply rooted or not—had some considerable consequences for American education, not merely because new values always tend to jostle the status quo, but even more so because in this case they provided the agenda for a new and assertive constituency in American life.

That constituency is made up of a significant social cadre, often called the New Class—occupationally centered in government, education, journalism, and education, of extremely high educational attainment, and usually from affluent and educated families. It considers itself to be a part of or at least allied to the intelligentsia. The growth and evolution of this cadre were sensed, with an uncanny prescience, by a number of astute observers—Joseph Schumpeter and George Orwell, for example, but most strikingly in some early essays by Lionel Trilling, who noted its adversarial tendencies and its sense of affiliation with those elements in the literary and political culture that were hostile to the given order, which in American terms meant the business culture.

These intuitions about the New Class, which have often been dismissed as either speculative or tendentious, have now been confirmed in some remarkable social research by S. Robert Lichter and Stanley Rothman comparing the views of the media elite (journalists working for prestigious newspapers, magazines, and television networks) with a group of high-level corporate executives. As we might expect, the former are more liberal on political and economic issues, and show more cynical attitudes toward American institutions. But the most substantial differences, by far, are to be found on moral questions—homosexuality, abortion, adultery—where the journalists give "liberal" responses three to four times as often as do the business executives.

Each group takes an adversary stance toward the other. Each sees the other as too influential, and itself as not influential enough, and each would like to replace the other in influence. This competition involves more than pride of place. Though it is an argument about politics and economics, it is also a struggle over which values will be ascendant—the ideal of self-restraint on the one hand, of individualism on the other.

Such differences, so strongly separating two segments of the upper bourgeoisie, are important to us not merely because these are strong and willful elites, but even more because that dispute has taken place, partially, in and about the schools.

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The mainstream culture fears the schools may be captured by those who, out of a misguided sense of compassion, are unwilling to make the demands necessary to a child's intellectual and moral growth. The modernist culture fears they are academic prisons which sustain the mercenary, authoritarian aims of the heartless elements of American society.

VI

A FEW months ago, I took part in taping a series of broadcasts on the state of American secondary education. For nearly a full day, our panel of five complained about the public schools: their mediocrity, their low standards, the loss of discipline and the prevalence of drugs, legislative and judicial intrusion, the abysmal level of science and mathematics teaching, the poor quality of education majors, and much, much more.

Having listened to six hours of steady pessimism, the moderator concluded by asking the group to predict the *next* ten years. Every face brightened. Things would be far better: demographic trends were favorable, with fewer and more able students; social pathology showed signs of ebbing; the legislators and judges had at last learned their lesson and would leave the schools alone; SAT scores would soon rise; school administrators were feeling more confident; and parents were making themselves heard. All in all, we could look forward to a glorious decade.

As Diane Ravitch has pointed out, that fluctuating mood has been all too characteristic of American sentiment on education—our pessimism is succeeded by utopian zeal. Will it really be a glorious decade? Probably not, although the schools are indeed beginning to lift themselves from the depths of the last two decades. Chester E. Finn, Jr. thinks we may be approaching a national consensus on the importance of educational excellence. That consensus is evident at the local level, among almost all parents and most classroom teachers, wherever we find a clear determination to elevate the quality of schooling.

Yet that resolve has been present for years, and change has been slow in coming. If you spend some time among the intellectuals of education—the writers and professors—you soon see some of the reasons. A great many of them are simply stuck in the 1960's. They believe that the widespread yearning for achievement and discipline has somehow been trumped up, that it represents a strategy to oppress minorities or to stamp out student creativity. The most powerful teachers union, the National Education Association, offers a politicized agenda for the schools, giving more stress to racial quotas in hiring than to the achievement of excellence. And many of those genuinely interested in quality want to avoid controversy, or hope to finesse the touchy issue of intellectual standards through the wonders of the technetronic age—a microcomputer at every desk.

This country deserves far better public schooling, but will get it only if it can find a way to cope with the intellectual inertia of our educational leadership.

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Whatever Happened to Willy Brandt?

David Gress

In the summer of 1944, a thirty-year-old German exile named Herbert Frahm approached the American embassy in Stockholm with an interesting proposal. Everyone knew, said Frahm, that the defeat of Germany was only a matter of time. As a democratic socialist, he felt it important that Germans who believed in democracy should have a say in drawing the geographical boundaries and, of course, in deciding the political and economic organization of postwar Germany. The postwar boundaries should be drawn so that they could not be exploited by the revanchist and nationalist agitators who were sure to appear. In particular, Frahm feared (in the words of the official report of the conversation) "that a frontier between Germany and Poland might be defined which would be so incompatible with the ethnic, economic, and historical preconditions that no German government would accept it." Asked for his own proposals for an eastern frontier, Frahm said that an "unbroken frontier" must be the first priority. Danzig, therefore, which was the proximate cause of the outbreak of war in 1939, must be given to Germany "irrespective of all questions of nationality of the local population." Silesia and Pomerania—large, rich, industrial and agricultural provinces of near 100-percent German nationality—were not even discussed, although Frahm did suggest the cession to Poland (not the Soviet Union) of parts of East Prussia, perhaps even including Königsberg.

All in all, the embassy reported, "not an unreasonable suggestion . . . coming from a German." Ambassador Herschel Johnson's final verdict on Frahm was even more interesting:

> Because of his background and his abilities, it is not difficult to foresee that he might have a promising political future in Germany and it is therefore believed that the State Department will wish to bear him in mind in case of future developments.

Johnson's words were more prophetic than he could have imagined. Frahm was indeed destined for momentous deeds, albeit under another name, one he had chosen for himself years before, as an eighteen-year-old Left-socialist activist in Lübeck: Willy Brandt..

In the course of his long career, Brandt has moved from being a leading representative and symbol of the anti-Communist Left to a position at the forefront of those socialists who urge recognition and acceptance of Communist conquests. Having declared in 1949 that "you cannot be a democrat without being anti-Communist," he later went on to initiate and preside over changes in East-West relations and in public attitudes to the problems of confrontation in Europe that have, on the one hand, gained him the Peace Prize of the Nobel Foundation (1971) and, on the other, criticism for having surrendered essential Western claims and positions. To be sure, Brandt himself sees no break in the continuity of his beliefs or his policies from the early days of exile onward. But to more objective eyes than his, there is a clear rupture between the pro-Western Brandt of the 50's and the neutralist Brandt of the present. What accounts for this amazing change?

Born in 1913 into a working-class family where identification with the Social Democratic party (SPD) was strong, Brandt cut his political teeth early. Typically, perhaps, he grew impatient with what he saw as effete SPD leadership in the face of the rising brown tide of National Socialism, and he joined the breakaway Socialist Workers' party (SAP), which from late 1931 to 1933 formed a haven for radical socialists. Of course, as is now clear, the divisions on the German Left, and especially the ineradicable hatred of the Communists for the Social Democrats ("social fascists"), were perhaps the single most important cause of Hitler's victory in the early months of 1933. By June 1933, all parties of the Left, including both the SPD and the short-lived SAP, had been outlawed and the years of terror and exile began. Leading Social Democrats who remained in Germany were arrested and tortured; some, like Kurt Schumacher and Fritz Erler, survived, if barely; others, like Julius Leber and Wilhelm Leuschner, became active in the Resistance and were executed after the attempted coup of July 20, 1944.

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Most of those who escaped made their way to London where the SPD set up its provisional headquarters under men like Erich Ollenhauer, who succeeded Schumacher as party leader in 1952. Not so Brandt. In early April 1933, only nineteen years old but with an already broad experience of political journalism as well as sectarian intrigue, he was sent by the SAP to Norway to organize a center of socialist exiles with the support of the Norwegian Labor party.

The next thirteen years were crucial for Brandt's political and intellectual development. On the one hand, his discovery of the pragmatic, reformist traditions of Scandinavian social democracy undermined his early revolutionary élan. But on the other hand he also absorbed the moralism and class resentment characteristic of the Norwegian Social Democrats. He came to see social democracy or democratic socialism—he makes no distinction between the two—in moral as much as in political terms.

This curious combination of pragmatism and moralism was not the only Scandinavian influence on Brandt. When the Germans occupied Norway in April 1940, Brandt, whose first book had just been published, escaped to Sweden. Here he met, among others, Gunnar Myrdal, just back from America and the studies in race relations that were to be published as *An American Dilemma*. From Myrdal, who wrote the Swedish Social Democratic party program of 1944, Brandt learned that the greatest task facing Social Democrats was the "synthesis of collectivism and liberalism." Instead of expropriating the means of production wholesale, the state, controlled by the workers' party, would take over "functions" such as distribution, safety regulation, insurance, finance, and so forth. Brandt and the Swedish Social Democrats appear to have believed seriously that this would enhance, not curtail, individual liberty and individual opportunity.

A third Scandinavian influence on Brandt, not unconnected with the others, was the great emphasis on peace. The fact that war was terrible and immoral was somehow supposed to mean that international political conflicts were not absolute, that the common interest in avoiding war also implied a common understanding of peace and a common standard of behavior.

BRANDT returned to Germany in mid-1945 as a Norwegian journalist accredited to cover the Nuremberg war-crimes trials. In October 1946 he was made press attaché in the Norwegian military mission in Berlin. There he immediately began discussions with the SPD and in particular with Ernst Reuter, who, as governing mayor during the 1948-49 blockade, personified the combination of anti-Communsm and desire for German reunification then typical of the SPD. In 1947, Brandt resumed the German citizenship of which he had been deprived by the Nazi regime in 1938, and two years later, in 1949, he became Reuter's aide.

Under Reuter's influence, and in the exposed situation of Berlin, the moral component of Brandt's political commitment was pushed into an anti-Communist direction. Indeed, the threat of Soviet power and the importance of American protection served to orient Brandt far more toward American policies than was the case for most of his SPD comrades, or even for Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and the governing Christian Democrats in Bonn. So much was this so that by the time he became mayor in 1957, Brandt was under attack by the Left as an American lackey and a cold-war extremist. With his Scandinavian background and his distrust of ideologies, moreover, Brandt also came out in strong support of the new Godesberg Program of the SPD, promulgated in 1959, which repudiated Marxism in favor of a mixed welfare-state economy.

Although there were touches of the later Brandt evident then—taking the form, for example, of occasional statements on the "need" for the two Germanys to talk to each other, to promote humanitarian contacts, and to ease the burden of division—these were overwhelmed throughout the 50's by an emphasis on the evils of Communist rule and the moral obligation to deny its legitimacy. Then, suddenly, the turning point came.

Brandt was in West Germany campaigning when, in the early hours of August 13, 1961, specially chosen and trained Communist cadres protected by East German troops and police began setting up the barricades that would soon be known as the Berlin Wall. He immediately returned. An old comrade offered to get 20,000 West Berlin construction workers out to remove the barricades and the barbed wire as soon as they went up, daring the East German police to fire on their fellow countrymen. But Brandt said no, let the Americans take care of it. After a rousing speech to the city council in which he declared, among other things, that "protests will not be enough," Brandt appeared at Allied headquarters next morning to inquire what might be in the works to stop the outrage being perpetrated in violation of all agreements by the East Germans. The reply was: nothing.

Two days later, a courier brought a sizzling letter from Brandt to President John F. Kennedy in Washington, and returned the following day with Kennedy's reply. The contents of the reply are not known in detail. Clearly, however, it was the most brutal and open statement of the declared limits of American interest in the freedom of Berlin, in principles of international law, and in German unity to have been received by any leading German politician since 1945. Brandt later said:

> They [the Americans] said among other things: we still officially support reunification. Khrushchev has said that he does not want it, and that's the way it's going to be. In the mean-

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time it's in your own interest if by means of the proposed Four Power commission or other negotiations you can establish as many humanitarian contacts as possible.

The wall effectively ended the 1958-61 Berlin crisis by cauterizing its immediate source, namely, the continued and massive escape of East German citizens to the West through Berlin. Yet Walter Ulbricht, the ruler of East Germany, was right when he claimed that

> our actions also correspond to the stated or implied interests of bourgeois circles in [the West], who have in various ways suggested that the government of the GDR take control of that hotbed of unrest, West Berlin. The reaction so far of the NATO countries clearly shows the sense of relief felt by many NATO politicians. . . . Our security measures will now allow the peace-loving forces in West Germany . . . who do not want a military conflict, to restrain the extremists, from [Franz Josef] Strauss to Brandt.

Yes, Brandt *was* an "extremist" in those days, because he still believed in German unity, and, even more remarkably in retrospect, that a lasting peace in Europe was incompatible with the division of Germany. The success of Soviet and East German aggression convinced him otherwise.

This was, strictly speaking, illogical. Quite apart from the moral factor involved, the very existence of the Berlin Wall could only strengthen the argument that German division was a source of tension. Nevertheless, without American backing, a policy of principle seemed meaningless. One of Brandt's closest aides, Heinrich Albertz—who, not coincidentally, is today a leading elder statesman of the "peace movement"—estimated that Kennedy's letter was of immense significance in changing Brandt's outlook. It was on August 14, 1961, the day Brandt failed to get the response he expected from the Americans, that *Ostpolitik* was born.

After the wall and Brandt's change of heart, Kennedy's trip to Berlin in 1962 when he made the famous declaration, *"Ich bin ein Berliner,"* was of theatrical rather than political significance. Already in 1962 at Harvard, Brandt had given a talk on the "Ordeal of Coexistence" in which he strongly suggested that if stability in Europe were not going to be achieved by resistance, it would have to be achieved by negotiations—i.e., appeasement and concessions. For a posture of resistance unsupported by action or the requisite force would serve only to provoke further Soviet moves. In this narrow sense, Brandt's logic, which was now beginning to be reinforced by a new emphasis on humanitarian contacts and "small steps," was certainly sound. In essence, it has determined West German policy, whether of the SPD or the CDU-CSU, ever since.

In 1965, Brandt, now chairman of the SPD, threw himself full-time into the general elections in West Germany as the party's candidate for Chancellor. As a result of various political maneuvers, the SPD was admitted to the government in 1966 in the "Grand Coalition" with the Christian Democrats, and Brandt became Foreign Minister.

It was during this period that Brandt began to describe his final goal as a "European Peace Order" to be achieved by recognition of the status quo and, one presumes, gradual "change through convergence," in Egon Bahr's famous euphemism for the mutual neutralization and final confederation of the two Germanys. Articles and speeches by Brandt from these years bear titles like "Peace Above All," "Germany and the Soviet Union: The Beginnings of Dialogue," or "Détente—Repairing the Bridge Between East and West." By now, all trace was gone of Brandt's earlier moral conviction that those who had caused the split in the first place were not fit partners in bridge-building. Indeed, by slow degrees, the conviction that the Soviets were the only enemy of European, including East European, security, peace, and freedom, slipped into a tendency to fix blame on *both* sides —a version of the familiar "two-superpowers" argument that has been the bane of political common sense in Western Europe for the past fifteen years.

In 1969, the election results allowed the SPD to form the "Small Coalition" with the liberal FDP, who were at least as committed to the new *Ostpolitik* as the Social Democrats, and Brandt now became Chancellor. He immediately began his physical and metaphorical pilgrimages to Moscow, Warsaw, East Berlin, and Prague, carrying with him official West German recognition of the status quo in Eastern Europe, of the borders and the demographic "facts" created by Soviet power in 1944-45, and confessions of guilt for centuries of exploitation, pillage, and oppression perpetrated by Germans on Slavs and culminating in World War II.

The most dramatic episode in this series of pilgrimages was Brandt's visit to Erfurt in East Germany in March 1970, where he was met by the East German party boss Willi Stoph. Brandt's behavior on this occasion was striking and symptomatic. Large crowds had gathered to see the man who to them was still the Western hero, symbol of democratic Germany and of the hope for future liberty. Even the East German police failed to restrain them, and as Brandt, accompanied by Stoph, approached the hotel where he was to stay, the crowds broke loose with a roar and swarmed toward him, chanting "Willy! Willy!" and then, to avoid confusion with Stoph, "Willy *Brandt*! Willy *Brandt*!"

It would be impossible to imagine a clearer statement of the true feelings of Germans in the East, or of the tremendous prestige of the Western

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Chancellor. Brandt's reaction, however, was remarkable: instead of acknowledging the homage or in any way exploiting the dramatic humiliation of the petty totalitarian Stoph beside him, Brandt hunched his shoulders and almost ran into the hotel, refusing any contact with the demonstrators. Later, he appeared briefly at a window, but only to gesture for silence. He himself excused his behavior by arguing that "after all, in two days I would be back in Bonn, whereas they. . . ."

In the negotiation itself, Stoph spent the usual Communist hour-and-a-half denouncing Brandt, the West, and all their policies. In his reply, Brandt did not demand an apology, nor did he seek to refute Stoph. He simply reiterated his own good faith and his desire for further discussions. No statements of principle, no assertion of rights or moral claims. It was as though the fervor of the "democratic anti-Communist" of the early 50's had disappeared entirely, giving way to an equally fervent desire for negotiations, talks, agreements at any price. As for the actual substance of the conflict, the political order of Germany and Europe, it had evidently disappeared from Brandt's mind.

So fixated did Brandt become on the idea of a new relation with the East that, when presented with evidence that his personal liaison man for party affairs, Günter Guillaume, was an East German spy, he refused to take it seriously. Guillaume was thus allowed to go on nosing steadily deeper into political and military secrets, until finally, after much delay, the blow fell. In the morning of April 24, 1974, with the East-West sky seemingly clear of clouds, Guillaume was arrested. Brandt was left with no choice but to resign as Chancellor (while remaining leader of the party).

"How could they do this to me, who have done so much for them?" he wailed, meaning the East Germans. That Communists should act like Communists was no longer self-evident to the man who in 1949 had proclaimed the incompatibility of Communism and democracy.

BRANDT's departure from office did not entail a departure from politics. Rather, it allowed him to assume the role for which he had long yearned: that of the elder statesman of the "European Peace Order." As such, he has been chairman of the Socialist International (SI) since 1976 and of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues (ICIDI) since 1977. In these roles, while insisting that he still believes that the "real socialism" of the East is incompatible with freedom and justice, he has nevertheless worked not to strengthen the West and the values he professes to admire, but their enemies. As chairman of the SI, for example, Brandt has consistently supported or expressed solidarity with anti-Western and anti-democratic forces like the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the guerrillas in El Salvador. The one great exception to this rule was in Portugal in 1974-75, where Brandt and the SI undertook a successful effort to back Mario Soares and thereby helped to prevent a Communist takeover of the country. Otherwise, the actions of the SI since 1970 have been almost entirely hostile to Western interests—interests that the SI once recognized as largely identical with its own.

The other forum of Brandt's international activity, the ICIDI, was formed to investigate the problems of Third World poverty and to determine, if possible, how the North-South gap might be narrowed. The commission's conclusions in *North-South* (1980), usually known as the Brandt Report, amounted to little more than an indictment of the West (or North) as responsible for the poverty of the South, together with a stark warning that war, violence, and other catastrophes will occur unless there is a global redistribution of capital. Here too, then, Brandt has taken an anti-Western position, and one, moreover, which involves abandoning the primacy of freedom in favor of a world of coercive regulation.

Within Germany itself, most of Brandt's interventions during the chancellorship of his successor Helmut Schmidt had the effect of undercutting and undermining Schmidt's stand on security and particularly of inciting the Young Social Democrats (the Jusos) to constant rebellion and opposition. Partly as a consequence of this, Schmidt gradually shifted his position to such an extent that by late 1981 he was virtually congratulating Jaruzelski on the crackdown in Poland, and assuring the world that "Herr Honecker" (the East German dictator) "shares my concerns for stability." Certainly, Schmidt may have believed that in making such statements, he was serving the cause of peace and stability, even though he could hardly have thought he was serving the cause of freedom that used to rank highest for Social Democrats. But without Brandt's prestige and pressure, and the activist agitation in the SPD which Brandt supported and encouraged, Schmidt would hardly have gone so far.

Thus Willy Brandt's transformation—from a Social Democrat who believed that the moral values of democratic socialism and the political interests of Germany alike demanded solidarity with the West and resistance to Soviet imperialism, into a proponent of neutralism as between West and East—foreshadowed what has been happening to the European socialist movement as a whole. From the American point of view, the greatest irony in this tragic and dangerous development is that it should have been triggered by the weak response of Washington to the Berlin Wall, and the willingness signified by this response to accept and eventually even legitimize the indefinite control of Eastern Europe by the Soviet Union.

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Impersonations

Elizabeth Kristol

Over the past fifty years, an unusual genre of political journalism has developed. The intellectuals who practice it believe that the best way to understand the people they study—the urban and rural poor, soldiers, minorities—is to *become* one of them. One of the first such efforts was made by George Orwell, who was not content to remain on the sidelines observing the conditions of the working class; in the early 1930's he chose to become a worker himself, an experience he chronicled in *Down and Out in Paris and London*. In 1959, John Griffin, a white Southerner, had his skin chemically darkened in order to live as a black man in the American South of that period. His book, *Black Like Me*, was praised by newspapers across the country, and is still read in classrooms today.

Two new additions to the ranks of these intellectual cross-dressers are Carol Lynn Mithers and John Coleman. Miss Mithers recently wrote a cover story for the *Village Voice* entitled "My Life as a Man," in which she describes her three months disguised as a male. A few months later, *New York* magazine published its own cover story by John Coleman, former president of Haverford College and current president of the Edna McConnell Clark philanthropic foundation, telling of his self-imposed life as a homeless man on the streets of New York. The aims of these two authors are clear: they wish to experience first-hand what it is like to be male/homeless, and they wish to pass on this inside knowledge to the public.

Carol Mithers has a burning desire to know what it is like to be a man. She wants to learn, she says, "how being a man is different from being a woman—not in the obvious, dramatic ways, but on a concrete mundane level." She decides she will dress up as a man for three months, the better to get an inside view. The only thing she will change is her clothes. She will "do the same work, see the same friends, go to the same movies, markets, restaurants, and bars—be the very same person I was as a woman. I would call myself David. . . . By changing only my sex, I thought, I might be able to see just how important a variable gender was, and in what ways."

To that end, she flattens her chest with an Ace bandage, puts on unisex clothes, and glues a beard and mustache to her face. When she stands before the mirror she is shocked: "I had never seen this person before. He was me. He was a total stranger. He was a man."

Carol/David starts reading *Esquire* (subtitle: "Man at His Best"). All goes well until she comes to an article on male impotence. The author at one point suggests: "Pretend that you, the reader, are—heaven forbid—impotent." Carol Mithers, her crotch stuffed with a sock, is stymied. She works at it, and works at it, and finally succeeds in imagining, not the impotence requested of her, but instead an erection. "And then my brain short-circuited: I was asking it to do too much."

Her boyfriend, J. Willie, adjusts quickly to seeing his girlfriend in a beard (he is a sociologist). Miss Mithers boasts, "[H]e could deal with going to bed with a woman and half an hour later respond to her in public as his male buddy." But it is the responses of the public—waiters, bartenders, people on the street—that the author values the most. When she and her sister go bar-hopping one evening, she is overwhelmed by sexual "signals." The bartender looks at her differently and serves her more quickly, she thinks. Men do not hassle her (was she besieged as a woman?). Her most illuminating experience, though, the one that will come to symbolize so many things, is when she discovers that, as a man, she can take a *whole handful* of peanuts, rather than picking from the bowl one at a time ("I was a man. I could *eat*").

Nuts are not enough, however. Carol Mithers wants more. She, like so many men, wants to test her manliness. She makes her boyfriend take her to a strip-tease show. "I wanted to look at the very worst part of the world that as a woman I didn't see." J. Willie, not in the habit of frequenting such places, agrees reluctantly. Watching the sleazy performance, he is greatly discomfited. Miss Mithers, however, fights off any confusing feelings. "I didn't want to feel feminist outrage or sisterly sympathy. I wanted to react to this as a man." Alas, she can muster no excitement over the events on stage.

Miss Mithers's final infiltration into the world of men is the most grueling of all. She attends a meeting of a men's liberation group. She is appalled. Men sitting around in a circle discussing their feelings! She cannot take it. "I found the idea of men talking honestly with each other about their feelings just plain ridiculous. It was a point of view that troubled one of my women friends ('This sort of behavior among men is to be *encouraged*, not mocked'), greatly upset J. Willie, and for which I could find no reasonable explanation except that my opinion of male emotional development was not, to put it mildly, too high." Or open to change, one

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might add. She "made her escape" in a hurry, though one might have thought the temptation for a reporter to remain would have been irresistible.

It comes as no surprise to hear Miss Mithers confess at the end of the article that her experiment taught her little about men. She would have been wise to bow out gracefully with that admission. But no, she concludes by saying that what she did learn was what it means to be a woman. A woman, she has discovered (although it is abundantly clear she has always so believed), is "at war with her body," and has a "stunted" notion of power. By living as David, Carol claims, she developed a "gut understanding of power and freedom." David could "eat freely, be imperfect, not smile to excuse himself, demand recognition for his presence." (Those peanuts are at the head of the list.) Of course, none of these things is open to women in today's society. Does that mean we women should all dress up as men? No, says Miss Mithers, for we can learn from her rich experiences: "wanting power," she informs us, "isn't the same as wanting a penis."

JOHN COLEMAN was not trying to better his condition (Miss Mithers would never put it in those words, but her acute peanuts envy belies a preference for the male state), but rather to worsen it. What is more, this is a skill he has been developing for some time. In 1973, Coleman shocked the world—or at least the academic establishment—by taking a sabbatical from his distinguished post as president of Haverford College in order to spend two months working at a variety of blue-collar jobs, a time he describes in his book, *Blue-Collar Journal*. He dug sewer ditches, worked as a salad-and-sandwich man, and collected garbage. This time around, as his *New York* article recounts, he spent ten days impersonating one of New York City's derelicts.

To ready himself for the role, Coleman buys a "homeless outfit" on Houston Street for $19, and steels himself for ten days on the city's streets in the dead of winter. He has allowed himself $40 for the ten days, 99 cents of which he spends immediately on a breakfast special. One day is much like another: "Washing up at the station. Coffee on the street. Breakfast at Blimpie. A search for the *Times* in trash baskets. And then a leisurely stretch of reading in the park." True, he does have to sleep on sidewalk grates, but his days are really his own. And this latter-day Baedeker seems to enjoy it: "Today, I saw the Flatiron Building in a new light, I soaked up the quiet of the Little Church Around the Corner, I studied the ironwork outside a couple of the houses on the west side of Gramercy Park. No need to hurry on." And there are so many new eating places to try.

But what of these shelters we have been reading so much about? Are they as horrible as we hear? They are indeed, Coleman insists. "I've seen plenty of drawings of London's workhouses and asylums in the times of Charles Dickens," he says (who in the Men's Shelter has not?), and "now I've seen the real thing, in the last years of the 20th century in the world's greatest city." There are crowded conditions, long lines, and rude attendants. Worse still, they rush you over dinner, something good restaurants never do.

For three nights he sleeps undisturbed, but on his fourth and last night there is a scary incident. While sitting in a waiting room with a group of fellow vagrants, Coleman unthinkingly places one foot on the rung of the chair in front of him. The chair's occupant is large, black, and very angry. And he has an even larger friend. This "big man," as Coleman poetically calls him, bombards him all day with insults and threats. Coleman feels very white and scared. He finds occasion to scrawl his name, address, and office phone number on a piece of paper and slip it into his pocket—"at least someone would know where to call if the threats were real. I knew I couldn't and wouldn't defend myself in this setting." As luck would have it, he never has to defend himself. The "big man" soon becomes bored with such easy prey, and Coleman spends his final homeless night in peace.

Never was a derelict so thoroughly bourgeois. Coleman seems to have an uncanny ability to replicate his upper-middle-class life even while being down and out. He drinks coffee and reads the *Times*. He spends much of his time admiring architecture. (In the earlier *Blue-Collar Journal* he was forever hopping to museums between sewer shifts, and his two-month sabbatical—taken for the express purpose of joining the working class—culminated in a visit to the opera houses of Vienna and Milan.) He soaks in the wonders of New York as if he were enjoying to the fullest a day off—which he is. Even when Coleman eats, he dines. His "Diary of a Homeless Man" reads like a *New York on $4 a Day*: "The soups I've had each night at the Pavillion [coffee shop] have been good enough to compete with the fare at some of New York's fancier eateries. The lentil, the clam, and the vegetable taste even better when you consider the price—$1. And there's no problem with slow service at peak hours" (John Coleman **** —*New York Magazine*).

The truth is, that is exactly what John Coleman was doing: living in New York on four dollars a day. No one is saying that is an easy feat, but it is also a far cry from being genuinely homeless and destitute. The only problem Coleman faced was one of budgeting; the homeless man must *survive*. Orwell and Griffin too in their days were budgeters *par excellence*. In *Down and Out in Paris and London*, Orwell allotted himself six francs a day, and when that ran out he borrowed from a friend. Griffin set out for the ghetto with $20 in cash and $200 in traveler's checks—a hefty sum in today's currency. Coleman went blue-collar with the same amount in traveler's checks and a gasoline credit card (it was at the height of the energy crisis—gas was expensive). We half expect to see him on TV, rising from a steam grate, dressed in rags, and holding out a piece of green plastic: "I'm president of a major foundation and a distinguished author. . . ." The American Express Card: don't be homeless without it.

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WHAT is most maddening about Carol Mithers and John Coleman —indeed, about all intellectual quick-change artists—is the hypocrisy of their behavior. Leslie Fiedler described the problem in his comments on the effort of a young, socialist, and affluent Simone Weil to identify with the masses by taking a job in an automobile factory:

> It is hard to know how to judge the venture. Undoubtedly, there is in it something a little ridiculous: the resolve of the Vassar girl of all lands to "share the experience" of the working class; and the inevitable refusal behind that resolve to face up to the fact that the freedom to *choose* a worker's life, and the consciousness of that choice, which can never be sloughed off, make the dreamed-of total identification impossible.

It is precisely the ability to choose that makes the difference. Coleman is so proud of having disguised himself as poor that he does not see that the derelict's inability to go to Bloomingdale's and buy a John Coleman outfit is the very essence of his condition. Choices are temporary. What characterizes being destitute is the feeling that the condition is permanent. Coleman does not recognize the vast—and unbridgeable—difference between making a conscious decision to live on a fixed amount of money and endure certain temporary discomforts, and finding oneself reduced to such a state with no end in sight. A crucial part of what it means to be homeless is to be hopeless: to feel as if one's condition were irremediable, to forget what other, better, conditions were like. Neither of these authors can bear the thought that we do not always have options at our disposal. Carol Mithers will not concede that our sexual identity is formed, in large part, by the realization—usually arrived at earlier in life than her photograph would indicate—that we are members of a particular sex, and that in this matter at least there are no options. It doesn't occur to Coleman that a large part of what it means to be destitute is to feel there is no way out.

What underlies the trivialization of experience entailed in both of these accounts is a deep and unacknowledged aversion to the notion of limits. Part of this simply arises from affluence: in a society and an age in which we are faced with a seemingly infinite number of options, we forget that there exist very real limits on our powers. We are told, over and over again in VISA commercials, perfume advertisements, and "Living Sections" that we can be everything, do everything, have everything. Miss Mithers genuinely thinks that the male experience is open to her—just as a career in banking or a life as a homemaker might be. Coleman genuinely thinks the experience of being homeless is open to *him*, just as were jobs as a ditch digger and garbage collector.

At the heart of this sort of self-deception is moral outrage. Carol Mithers and John Coleman do not think differences between people are *fair*. It is not fair to be cursed with belonging to the female sex, which at times restricts what one can or cannot do. It is not fair that there are people who live in affluence while others are destitute. "These differences that you see," one can hear both these writers say, "are not real. Maybe if we all looked the same, we'd all be the same." Even Orwell was guilty of this. After his brief sojourn with the working class, he concluded that "the average millionaire is only the average dishwasher dressed in a new suit." For John Coleman, the reverse is true: a vagrant is just a wealthy philanthropist in rags. Carol Mithers is committed in her belief that sexual identity resides in clothes: if she but dresses the male part she will assume all the proper male responses, including the sexual ones. These are people for whom, truly, all the world's a stage.

Such a simple view of the world serves a purpose. To those with a strong egalitarian bent, to admit that inequities among classes and sexes and individuals are the result of a long and complicated history would be extremely painful. Their frustration fairly leaps off the page: we can do everything; how is it that we can't eradicate all these injustices? Far better to speak as if differences between people were slight and superficial, something within our power to control. Neither of these masqueraders will face the fact that inequality is bigger than they are, and that fate and contingency are ready at every moment to thwart their intentions to create what they regard as a moral world.

SOMETHING happens, though, when we stop taking differences between people seriously. We lose our ability to sympathize. For all their elaborate efforts, both these writers are incapable of getting outside themselves enough to imagine what it is really like to be someone else. For Coleman, being homeless means a leisurely cup of coffee and the *Times*. It means a stroll around the city, appreciating its architectural nuances. It never occurs to him that, among other things, he is embarking on the ascetic life in the peak of health; that the man who has lived on the street for ten or fifteen years is usually wracked with alcoholism, mental illness, bodily sickness—and that feebleness of mind and body might dull one's aesthetic responses. It never occurs to him that the man who has not eaten a proper meal in years might not "review" the culinary quality of his purchase. Nor does it occur to him that many of the homeless men he mingles with are alone in the world; that they do not have phone numbers of colleagues and friends to be contacted if anything should happen.

The most conspicuous aspect of Carol Mithers's account is her complete deafness to men. On the single occasion when she is practically forced to listen to them speak their minds (she certainly never asks), she flees the room in disgust. Why bother listening when she can simply put on a tie and beard and learn first-hand what it's like? Having put on the outward trappings of those they are impersonating, John Coleman and Carol Mithers also assume they are sharing in their thoughts and feelings.

But sympathy involves becoming sensitive to thoughts and feelings *different* from our own. It is precisely the acceptance of distance and difference that enables us to

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distinguish our own perception of the world from that of others, and that allows us via imagination to enter into worlds that are very different from our own. We have all known people who are so busy focusing on the similarities between themselves and us that they are, unwittingly, oblivious to what makes us individual and unique. Such people are usually well-intentioned; they *think* they are trying to understand us. But they are too lacking in imagination, too intolerant of difference, to learn much. In the end, these two articles tell us little more than what it is like for Carol Mithers to feel powerless in a male-dominated society, and for John Coleman to be the most adaptive philanthropist of the decade. This is not why we chose to read their articles (or why they were accepted for publication). We had hoped, perhaps naively, to learn something we did not already know about the male psyche and the condition of our city's homeless. Little did we know we would be listening to two people, who, with Walt Whitman, seem eternally baffled at "who there can be more wonderful than myself."

Fiction

Mailer Hits Bottom

Joseph Epstein

On page 421 of Norman Mailer's new novel, *Ancient Evenings*,* my eyeballs glazed like a franchise doughnut, I came across the following line, spoken by the Pharaoh Ptah-nem-hotep to Menenhetet II, the character who for the most part narrates this more-than-700-page book: "To tell too little is becoming your sin." That caught my attention, as did, earlier, this line: " 'Yes,' said my great-grandfather, 'and I have observed that most of those who are so fortunate as to have been given the great member of a god often show an uncontrollable lack of patience.' " Long before that moment I had thought to throw this small tombstone of a novel against the wall—patience, let me speak plainly, never having been my long suit. But I forbore, and instead, in the all-too-brief intervals among the multiple acts of buggery and other sexual permutations that festoon the novel's pages, allowed my mind to formulate reverse blurbs: "Insomnia sufferers, your cure is at hand." "Gives the argument for censorship a whole new lease on life." "Extremely repulsive, utterly loathsome."

My pleasure in *Ancient Evenings* was not, then, unbounded. Yet when a talented writer writes a truly wretched book—and I believe *Ancient Evenings* to be wretched in a big-time way—all sorts of interesting questions arise. First among them is, why did he do it? This might be followed by, how could he have lost his self-critical bearings so completely? What in the intellectual environment of the day encouraged him on his crash course? When did his wagon jump the track in the first place? And, finally, was there something in his general line of thought that made artistic disaster inevitable?

Many would deny the chief premise behind these questions—that is, that Norman Mailer is a talented writer. Certainly he has written more that is bloated, foolish, and simply junky than any other serious writer of our time. He has specialized in making a public buffoon of himself, and acted in ways that reveal a deeper strain of self-deception than is usually permitted a man who stakes out for himself the claim to being a major novelist. Writing empty books, running for mayor of New York City and performing other clownish antics, aiding in the parole of a killer who, once out of prison, soon killed again, and generally leading a public life best fitted for the People section of *Time* magazine—Norman Mailer must have plenty to occupy his thoughts on modern evenings in Brooklyn Heights.

Still, when he is working well, Norman Mailer has impressive gifts. I was sharply reminded of this while reading *The Executioner's Song* (1979), his lengthy account of the life and execution of the murderer Gary Gilmore. In that book Mailer reveals himself as a man of enormous sympathy—and the best kind of sympathy, imaginative sympathy, the sympathy that a writer shows for the people he writes about by being able to enter into and successfully convey their interior lives. Again and again in *The Executioner's Song*—a book not without its flaws, which I shall get to presently—Mailer displays this power of getting inside the minds of people whose circum-

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stances in life are so very different from his own: the arthritic mother of a killer, a successful Mormon lawyer, a police squealer. Mailer can portray the chaos in the life of a nineteen-year-old girl, unmarried, with two childen, and no prospects of any kind—and make you believe in her, feel for her, wish her life were not so hopeless as you know it will be.

But if expenditure of imaginative sympathy has always been one of the great things that novelists do, it is not what Norman Mailer is famous for. He is famous instead for creating his own literary persona, that of an autobiographical journalist more than a novelist, a kibitzer known for pushing himself to the center of the stage, above all a personal voice, savvy, logorrheic, always and endlessly self-dramatizing. Here is a sampler from *Advertisements for Myself* (1959):

> Like many another vain, empty, and bullying body of our time, I have been running for President these last ten years in the privacy of my mind, and it occurs to me that I am less close now than when I began. Defeat has left my nature divided, my sense of time is eccentric, and I contain within myself the bitter exhaustions of an old man, and the cocky arguments of a bright boy. So I am everything but my proper age of thirty-six, and anger has brought me to the edge of the brutal. In sitting down to write a sermon for this collection, I find arrogance in much of my mood. It cannot be helped. The sour truth is that I am imprisoned with a perception which will settle for nothing less than making a revolution in the consciousness of our time. Whether rightly or wrongly, it is then obvious that I would go so far as to think it is my present and future work which will have the deepest influence of any work being done by an American novelist in these years.

Today this style seems pretentious in the extreme, feverish, self-parodying—"the edge of the brutal," "sour truth," "imprisoned within a perception"—yet it did not seem so then. It seemed then, in fact, rather seductive; it found many inferior imitators, among them not a few overheated academics. For a time, critics tended to praise Norman Mailer in quite Maileresque terms. In reviewing *The Armies of the Night*, Mailer's account of a 1967 anti-Vietnam war march on the Pentagon, Richard Gilman, in the *New Republic*, wrote:

> All the rough force of his imagination, his brilliant gifts of observation, his ravishing if often calculating honesty, his daring and his chutzpah are able to flourish on the steady ground of a newly coherent subject . . . history and personality confront each other with a new sense of liberation.

A new sense of liberation—the admiration for Norman Mailer during the late 1960's and the early 1970's certainly owed a good deal to that. But let us return briefly to the passage from *Advertisements for Myself* and check it for prophetic accuracy. Mailer was quite wrong about his influence as a novelist. Apart from two not very distinguished works, *An American Dream* (1964) and *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967), Mailer ceased writing novels. Instead he wrote an ample amount of journalism to which he would append the word novel in subtitles. *The Armies of the Night*, for example, carries the subtitle "History as a Novel, The Novel as History," and, later, *The Executioner's Song* is subtitled "A True Life Novel." It was not Norman Mailer the novelist, then, but Norman Mailer the journalist and public figure who did help make, in his phrase, something akin to "a revolution in the consciousness of our time." That does not seem to me in question. What is in question is the nature, or quality, of that revolution.

ALONG with Paul Goodman, Norman O. Brown, and a number of lesser figures—flacks, really—Mailer was one of the key men responsible for releasing the Dionysian strain in American life. To be sure, they had help from pot and other drugs, from the new sexual freedom, from rock music, and from the Vietnam war. Mailer was the premier journalist of this era. Whatever he wrote about—John F. Kennedy, the anti-war movement, our national political conventions—he pumped up with his self-dramatizations. Wherever Norman Mailer was, to hear Norman Mailer tell it, there was "the existential moment." He often referred to himself, in his own writings, in the third person, the better to mock yet also to push himself forward. A characteristic passage: "Yes, Mailer had an egotism of curious disproportions. With the possible exception of John F. Kennedy, there had not been a President of the United States nor even a candidate since the Second World War whom Mailer secretly considered more suitable than himself. . . ."

Yet he could on occasion shoot off observations of real power. In his coverage of the 1968 Democratic convention in Chicago he provided a portrait of Hubert Humphrey that could make anyone who cared for Humphrey wince at its deadly, and devastating, accuracy. There is a very moving moment in Mailer's *The Armies of the Night* where he describes the radical hippie contingent before the Pentagon exchanging stares with the young military policemen, each group seeing in the other its fantasies of the devil. No, had Mailer been less talented he could not have brought off what he did.

Nevertheless, read today his journalistic books all seem terribly overcooked—almost comically so. Crossing the line of MP's at the Pentagon in *The Armies of the Night*, Mailer has himself exclaim:

> "I won't go back. If you don't arrest me, I'm going on to the Pentagon," and knew he meant it, some absolute certainty had come to him, and then two of them leaped on him at once in the cold clammy murderous fury of all cops at the existential moment of their making their bust —all cops who secretly expect to be struck at that instant for all their sins—and a supervising force came to his voice and he roared, to his own distant pleasure in new achievement and new authority—"Take your hands off me, can't you see? I'm not resisting arrest."

And so on, into the dark night of the syntactical soul. A point that is worth making about this is that Mailer could not have been in danger for a moment. Someone un-

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known, someone without fame or funds, might have risked a blow over the head, but not a famous writer. There are, after all, existential moments and existential moments.

Feverish times get feverish writing, and this Norman Mailer through the 1960's was able to supply by the yard. Yet even before the tumult of the 60's, Mailer was a writer who seemed to flourish in tumult. His first novel, *The Naked and The Dead* (1948), was published when he was twenty-five, and though it was a great commercial success, it was also very much a young man's book—meant to be daring in its political views, its brave use (for the day) of blue language, its portrayal of low life. Right from the start Mailer had set up shop as an *enfant terrible*. Now sixty years old, he seems ever after to have been locked into the role. Thirty-five years as an *enfant terrible* leaves one a *vieux terrible*, which is a much more tiresome, not to say tiring, role to play.

Part of the terribleness of this particular *enfant* has been his penchant for literary violence. In much of Mailer's work some form of fascism, political or spiritual, looms as the great American danger, yet Mailer himself is almost invariably more fascinated than repelled by it. An incarnation of this fascist spirit appears in *The Naked and the Dead*, in the character of Sergeant Croft, a man whose very being is violent. The identification between Mailer and Croft is very strong, as Kenneth S. Lynn has recently remarked in these pages,* and as Croft only comes alive through the opportunity for violence, so does Mailer's prose come most alive in describing Croft.

IN TIME, violence began taking an ideological turn in Norman Mailer's writing. Nowhere did this become more clear than in an infamous essay he wrote in 1957 entitled "The White Negro." The essay acquired its infamy because in it Mailer, in the course of explaining the phenomenon of a type of the social outlaw known as the hipster, appeared to condone murder. The offending passage, which came armored in parentheses, is the following:

> (It can of course be suggested that it takes little courage for two strong eighteen-year-old hoodlums, let us say, to beat in the brains of a candy-store keeper, and indeed the act—even by the logic of the psychopath—is not likely to prove very therapeutic, for the victim is not an immediate equal. Still, courage of a sort is necessary, for one murders not only a weak fifty-year-old man but an institution as well, one violates private property, one enters into a new relation with the police and introduces a dangerous element into one's life. The hoodlum is therefore daring the unknown, and so no matter how brutal the act, it is not altogether cowardly.)

So far as I know, Norman Mailer has never apologized for this passage, or for any part of this essay. It is scarcely likely that he could have done so, for "The White Negro" has running through it the blueprint for Norman Mailer's own artistic career. For this reason it is worth briefly summarizing.

Behind the essay are the assumptions that, what with its concentration camps and atomic bombs, ours has been a particularly murderous century. In American life, according to Mailer, the great enemy is conformity, which is, in ways never really explained, subtly totalitarian. Much Maileresque exaggeration now comes into play: "A stench of fear has come out of every pore of American life, and we suffer from a collective failure of nerve." Nor is there any shortage of dubious statement: "A totalitarian society makes enormous demands on the courage of men, and a partially totalitarian society makes even greater demands, for the general anxiety is greater" (tell it to Solzhenitsyn). "The shits," Mailer announces, "are killing us."

Onto the scene comes the hipster, or, as Mailer once refers to him, "the American existentialist." He is a great disrupter—part psychopath, but one who seems in some way to have generalized his psychopathology sufficiently to know that his true enemy is a society that perpetually threatens to deaden his instinctual life. It is only through great risk, through living in the present, through engaging death, that the hipster maintains his poise and his authority:

> It is this knowledge which provides the curious community of feeling in the world of the hipster, a muted cool religious revival to be sure, but the element which is exciting, disturbing, nightmarish perhaps, is that incompatibles have come to bed, the inner life and the violent life, the orgy and the dream of love, the desire to murder and the desire to create, a dialectical conception of existence with a lust for power, a dark, romantic, and yet undeniably dynamic view of existence for it sees every man and woman as moving individually through each moment of life forward into growth or backward into death.

Mailer remarks that, at a modest estimate, there are ten million Americans who are more or less psychopathic, yet "probably not more than one hundred thousand men and women who consciously see themselves as hipsters, but their importance is that they are an elite with the potential ruthlessness of an elite, and a language most adolescents can understand instinctively, for the hipster's intense view of existence matches their experience and their desire to rebel."

IT IS one thing to understand the psychopathology of the hipster; another to sympathize with it. Mailer sympathizes with it—completely. How could it be otherwise when, though he never says so outright, he nonetheless clearly sees himself as the artistic arm of the hipster enterprise? The following passages from "The White Negro," meant to apply to the hipster, make much more sense when understood as expressing the underlying assumptions of Norman Mailer's own career as a writer:

> Given its emphasis on complexity, Hip abdicates from any conventional moral responsibility because it would argue that the results of our actions are unforeseeable, and so we cannot know if we do good or bad.

* In a review of *Mailer: A Biography* by Hilary Mills, March 1983.

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> What is consequent therefore is the divorce of man from his values, the liberation of the self from the Super-Ego of society. The only Hip morality . . . is to do what one feels whenever and wherever it is possible, and—this is how the war of the Hip and the Square begins—to be engaged in one primal battle: to open the limits of the possible for oneself, and for oneself alone, because that is one's need.
>
> . . . it takes literal faith in the creative possibilities of the human being to envisage acts of violence as the catharsis which prepares growth.
>
> A time of violence, new hysteria, confusion, and rebellion will then be likely to replace the time of conformity.

In Mailer's view, as man and as artist, you either move forward or you die—and as for man and artist, so for society. Such a view allies Mailer thoroughly with the notion that art must always be about the business of transcending previously established boundaries; it must smash icons, loosen the hold of settled morals, everywhere shatter complacency. The artist is most useful when he is most disruptive. As a writer, Mailer sees himself as destructive for the public good.

Fairly early in his career Mailer took for his model Ernest Hemingway. In prose style and in the general texture of their minds no two writers are more unlike, but what Mailer acquired from Hemingway, along with a lot of cheap boxing metaphors to describe his artistic career, was the notion of the novelist as perpetually in competition, both with his peers and with the writers of the past. ("So, mark you. Every American writer who takes himself to be both major and *macho* must sooner or later give a *faena* which borrows from the self-love of a Hemingway style.") But he also took the notion that a major writer must also be a major public personality. ("Let any of you decide for yourselves how silly would be *A Farewell to Arms* or, better, *Death in the Afternoon*, if it had been written by a man who was five-four, had acne, wore glasses, spoke in a shrill voice, and was a physical coward.") Hemingway, it must be said, was much better at this than Mailer. While Norman Mailer has indeed managed to become a major public personality, the personality he has over the years projected has not been one of cool courage ("grace under pressure," in the old Hemingway formulation) but instead one of chaos and confusion—of a somewhat muddled man straining to seem spiritually larger than he is.

From Hemingway, too, Mailer seems to have absorbed the additional notion that writing, no less than life itself, entails taking terrible risks. Of course the idea that the best life is the life lived dangerously does not begin in the mind and work of Ernest Hemingway. "Believe me!" noted Nietzsche, "The secret of reaping the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment from life is to live dangerously." And early in *Ancient Evenings* Mailer has his chief character announce: "In its true exchange, one cannot gain a great deal unless one is willing to dare losing all. That is how the loveliest plunder is found." But the notion that *writing* is a dangerous activity beautifully suits Mailer's sense of self-dramatization.

Such, then, has been the bulky baggage of ideas that Norman Mailer has dragged through his career: the artist must transcend all previous boundaries; he must be a disturber of the peace; he must regularly be making fresh breakthroughs; he must establish a public celebrity that will lend added luster to his work; he must see himself in perpetual competition with all other writers, in a kind of artistic-intellectual Mr. Universe contest; and, finally, he must recognize—and through his writing realize—that the life of the artist is fundamentally a most dangerous life, filled with risk and daring and the search for unknown treasure, a form of deep-sea diving of the mind.

Whatever the intrinsic merit of these notions—and I, for one, do not think there is much merit in them—they are dangerous above all to writers. Among other things, one cannot sustain a long literary career on them. It is noteworthy in this connection that those writers who (*mutatis mutandis*) did seem to work under such assumptions died, perhaps mercifully, young: Byron, Baudelaire, Rimbaud. Those who live long lives—Henry Miller comes to mind—become *vieux terribles*. A strong argument could be made that these same notions have done serious damage to Norman Mailer's own literary career. Not once but twice he has undergone a decade-long hiatus between novels. This probably should not surpise; after all, to shock, to break through, to live dangerously—a man cannot figure to do this year in and year out.

At the end of his first ten-year hiatus Mailer produced a novel entitled *An American Dream* (1965). He produced it, moreover, under extraordinary conditions. He wrote it in eight installments, for *Esquire*, under the pressure of magazine deadlines—the way, as the author himself modestly pointed out, Dostoevsky and Dickens wrote many of their novels. But Dostoevsky, but Dickens, *An American Dream* is not. It is instead a Maileresque fantasy with a hero, one Stephen Richards Rojack, who is the kind of man Mailer no doubt imagines himself to be. Along with being the "one intellectual in America's history with a Distinguished Service Cross," Rojack is a former U.S. Congressman, a television celebrity, a professor of existentialist psychology, author of *The Psychology of the Hangman*, a better than middling boxer, and a sack-artist of Olympian caliber. For intellectual provender, *An American Dream* offers a murder, a buggery, and a good deal of chatter about the CIA and the Mafia. Its message, put into the mind of Rojack, who goes off scot free after killing his wife, is this: "Comfortless was my religion, anxiety of anxiety, for I believed God was not love but courage. Love came only as a reward."

Mailer has taken his share of critical bumps over a long career, but at the same time there has also been a steady claque of admirers, always ready to justify, to find a deeper significance, to stand in articulate awe of his shoddiest work. Thus of even so puerile a novel as *An American Dream*, one claqueur, the critic Richard Poirier, could—

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and did—write that this novel showed "that there is clear indication that if he [Mailer] so chose he could write any kind of novel that literature has made available to us." Poirier went on: "What he wants to do, however, is something altogether more daring. He wants to show that the world of the demonic, the supernatural, the mad is not simply the reverse side of the world that sets the normal standards by which these other conditions are defined as abnormal. Instead he wants to suggest that these worlds are simultaneous, coextensive."

Ah, we sleep deep tonight. Criticism stands guard.

NO ONE can ever accuse Norman Mailer of being lazy. His problem, as a writer, has never been that of getting his bottom in his chair and his chair up to the desk; rather it has been getting out of his chair—of stopping. In 1967 Mailer published *Why Are We in Vietnam?*, a novel which was not directly about Vietnam but rather about Texans in Alaska hunting bears from helicopters and chewing up the landscape with powerful weapons. He lavished his prose upon political conventions, heavyweight fights, Marilyn Monroe, graffiti, astronauts, the new feminism. He became first a celebrity, then a celebrity bore. It became very easy to cease reading Norman Mailer, to cease taking him seriously.

When *The Executioner's Song* appeared in 1979, I felt that undergoing exploratory surgery was a more pleasant prospect than reading this more-than-1,000-page book. I was wrong. True, *The Executioner's Song* would not suffer for being cut by a few hundred pages, but it is nonetheless a remarkable book. It tells those of us of the middle classes, who get most of our information about American life from books, newspapers, and television, something about which we are likely to know very little: the not-quite-rooted white lower-middle-classes of the Western states who tend to live on time-payments and food stamps, off six-packs and fast food, in trailers or cinder-block homes and motel-like apartments. And it tells us about it extremely well—entering into it, as I have said, with an imaginative sympathy that greatly enlarges our understanding.

This is the milieu of Gary Gilmore, the killer who in Utah refused to appeal his death sentence, which was eventually carried out in January 1977. Gilmore was then thirty-five and had spent eighteen of his last twenty-two years in jails. Out of jail a very short while, he murdered, twice, both murders connected with robberies. To one of his victims Gilmore claims to have said: "Your money, son, *and* your life." He then shot him, point blank, in the back of the head. He slaughtered his second victim in the same manner. In *The Executioner's Song*, Mailer recounts these murders and the events leading up to them and those following after them, going back into the life of Gary Gilmore, of his girlfriend, of his and her relatives, jailers, cellmates, prosecuting and defense attorneys, and everyone else connected with Gilmore. It is an extraordinary work of journalism—so extraordinary that it becomes, in my view, literature.

Mailer's method in this book is close to what in fiction used to pass under the label of naturalism. The author intrudes as little as possible; his task is to show how environment affects character and character leads out into destiny, from which emerges, when it is effectively done, a picture of man in society, or at least a segment of society. Mailer's writing in *The Executioner's Song* is artfully unadorned; it is a plain controlled prose served up in short paragraphs:

> It came down on Nicole what an expression like "horrible loss" really meant. It was throwing away the most valuable thing in your life. It was knowing you had to live next to something larger than your own life. In this case, it was knowing that Gary was going to die.
>
> She began to think there was not even a minute when she stopped loving him, not for a minute. Not a minute of her day in which the guy was not in her mind. That she liked. She liked what was inside her. But it was spooky. She would take in a breath and recognize that she was falling more and more in love with a guy who was going to be dead.

But Mailer is really telling two stories here. Along with the story of Gary Gilmore's life and death, he is also telling the story—the distinctly and wretchedly contemporary story—of the elaborate negotiations involved in the "literary rights" to Gilmore's life. This story centers on a journalist named Lawrence Schiller, a former *Life* photographer, whose specialty it has become to purchase, organize, and sell off the literary rights to the lives of the notorious. Schiller had acquired the rights to Lenny Bruce's story from Bruce's widow, he had acquired the rights to Susan Atkins's life (in the Charles Manson case), he was the man who secured the last interview with Jack Ruby, and now he had moved in on the Gary Gilmore story. The mechanics of Schiller's operation are fascinating—selling off an interview with Gilmore to *Playboy*, a few photographs to this or that scandal sheet, something to the newsweeklies, bits and pieces to the European press, interviews with family members to ABC. Schiller himself is an interesting character, a man highly sensitive to being called scavenger and worse. Mailer treats him most gingerly but goes into his dealings with the utmost thoroughness. Well, almost utmost thoroughness. The only deal he does not mention is that which Schiller must have cut with Norman Mailer that made possible the writing of *The Executioner's Song*.

The Executioner's Song is additionally interesting because of the light it throws both on the past and on the future of Norman Mailer's career. Gary Gilmore was declared by the state of Utah to be technically and hence legally a psychopath, rather than a psychotic, and his psychopathology very tidily fits the definition of the psychopath-hipster in Mailer's "The White Negro."

In that essay, as I have noted, Mailer remarks that no one has yet projected himself into "essential sympathy" with the psychopath. This Mailer does in *The Executioner's Song*. The projection, in-

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deed the identification, of Mailer with Gary Gilmore, though it does not ruin the book, is nonetheless very great. Gilmore, at times, comes off as the very type of the artist. His parole officer, in Mailer's words, thinks, "They were about the same age, but Gilmore . . . looked much older. On the other hand, if you put up a profile of what an artist of thirty-five might look like, Gilmore could fit that physical profile." Gary Gilmore actually turns out to have been quite a good draughtsman. He was a prison autodidact; one of his favorite novels was J. P. Donleavy's *The Ginger Man*. He did not like television. He was fearless. (His final words to his executioners were, "Let's do it.") He was, in several respects, many things that Norman Mailer, at least in his theoretical writings, would seem to wish the artist, Norman Mailer, to be—except, of course, dead.

But what saves *The Executioner's Song* is that it does not include any of Norman Mailer's theorizing. It is descriptive, naturalistic in the mode of James T. Farrell and John Dos Passos—writers Mailer much admired when he was a young man. Mailer's talent, in my view, lies in this mode. That may seem like a put-down but is not intended as one. The methods of modernism, with very few exceptions, have not been successful in the novel. Although *The Executioner's Song* is not a novel, it is the best of Norman Mailer's books, the one that seems most likely to be readable ten or twenty years from now. Mailer, to repeat, is best when he is descriptive, when his imaginative sympathies are engaged. He is at his worst when he is being Norman Mailer, the modern thinker. He is, that is to say, a serious writer except when he is thinking, and the trouble is that over his long career he has been thinking a very great deal.

IN *Ancient Evenings*, unfortunately, Mailer is thinking nearly full-time. Although his new novel is set in the 12th and 13th centuries B.C.E., for the most part in the reigns of the Egyptian Pharaohs Ramses II and Ramses IX, Mailer is mostly concerned with his standard obsessions—ambition, sex, telepathy. To which one can now add reincarnation, though this came up in *The Executioner's Song*, where time and again Gary Gilmore remarks that in his current life he feels he is paying for the sins of an earlier life and time and again he remarks upon his confidence in yet another life to come. Mailer, too, has come to believe "that we're not here just one time, and I don't have any highly organized theology behind that—it's just a passing conviction that keeps returning."

Ancient Evenings is chiefly about the four lives of one Menenhetet I, who has been thrice reincarnated and who during his first life was charioteer to the great Pharaoh Ramses II, and later governor of his harem and guard of his two queens. The greater part of *Ancient Evenings* is taken up with this Menenhetet I recounting his life under Ramses II, and doing so for Pharoah Ramses IX on the long night of the festival known as the Night of the Pig, when one may tell the Pharoah unpleasant truths. The narration gets complicated, for sometimes Menenhetet tells his own stories, at other times we learn about things through his great-grandson, Menenhetet II, who has gifts of telepathy and who, through these gifts, tells us what other people in the novel are thinking.

The architecture of *Ancient Evenings* is highly elaborate. The novel begins in a tomb, where the spirits of Menenhetet I and Menenhetet II first encounter each other. After forcing the spirit of his great-grandson to perform fellatio upon him—are you still with me?—he informs him (and us), lengthily, about the theogony of the Egyptian gods: Ra, Amon, Maat, Osiris, Isis, Set, Horus, and, as a baseball announcer in my town has it, "all that gang." Mailer has obviously swotted up the subject of ancient Egypt for this novel, studied *The Book of the Dead*, stuffed himself with such facts as are available on Egyptian methods of embalming, on religious ritual, on daily life. He has tossed into the stew a belief in telepathy and reincarnation, in neither of which Egyptians of the ancient world quite believed, and added ornate sets of his own devising. I do not know enough about Egypt to judge whether he has got this material down correctly—though it is comforting to note that at the court of Ramses IX they use the word "hopefully" quite as ungrammatically as do so many American undergraduates and television journalists—but I do know that as a subject, ancient Egypt presents certain very real problems.

The first of these problems is that reincarnation can wreak havoc on the fundamentals of plotting. One of the nice things about death, for a novelist, is that it brings plots to a close. But under reincarnation, if you die, that is only the beginning—your troubles have only started. It is worth noting that Menenhetet talks almost solely about his first life. If he had gone into similar detail concerning his second, third, and fourth lives, Mailer would have had on his hands a novel well in excess of 2,000 pages.

No one, surely, can have wished *Ancient Evenings* longer than it is now. Even among the novel's admirers, you can hear, in the midst of their praise, the groans of fatigue this book has brought on. Thus Walter Clemons, in *Vanity Fair*: "Whatever you decide about it, and I warn you it can be hard going. . . ." Thus Brigitte Weeks, in the Washington *Post*: "But it is not easy to stay afloat in a flood, and despite all the glitter and the magic, the imaginative gymnastics, this reader, at least, sometimes felt as if she were going under for the third time." Thus Peter S. Prescott, in *Newsweek*: "Stupefying the book may be. . . ." Thus Harold Bloom, in the *New York Review of Books*: ". . . if you read *Ancient Evenings* for the story, you will hang yourself."

Part of the problem is Mailer's Egyptology. If he has learned about some bit of Egyptian lore or craft, not wishing to be wasteful, he lays it on us. He will stop, for example, to expatiate on Egyptian methods of rock cutting. Too often the novel reads like something devised by Mel Brooks's Two Thousand Year Old Man—though he'd have to be three thousand years old—but without the jokes. Not that some of

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these items aren't finely done. Mailer's account of the battle of Kadesh is splendid; and so is his account of the embalming of Menenhetet II, as the spirit of the man being embalmed details it. Yet *Ancient Evenings* is finally a novel altogether without pace. As Menenhetet I explains the gods to Rama-Nefru, the Pharaoh Ramses II's second queen, he notes, "A haze was over my eyes." Friend, I thought, you are not alone.

MAILER has said that his novel is about magic and that it reflects his interest in the very rich. But the real subjects, once again for Mailer, are power and sex, and apart from the battle of Kadesh, all the big moments in the book have to do with sex. It is a sign of the deep poverty of Norman Mailer's imagination that the only climax he can imagine in any human relationship is really just that—a sexual climax. Everything in this novel builds up to someone penetrating someone else in one orifice or another, usually with a good deal of humiliation involved for one of the parties, a sense of triumph for the other. Tender feelings rarely come into play; love, never.

Sex, its contemplation or enactment, must take up more than half of *Ancient Evenings*. Without it the novel would not even be a bad *National Geographic* article. Since no one else has pointed it out, may I be the first to announce that the sex in *Ancient Evenings* is extremely repulsive? Mailer has wrought a courtly language for this novel, which he combines with a certain (as he imagines it) antiquity of phrasing, so that orgasms are described as "coming-forth"; so that, preparatory to buggering a thief, Menenhetet II notes, "No door could have withstood my horn"; so that Menenhetet remarks of his mother, "The fresh seed of my father was the finest lotion she had ever found for her face"; so that Nefertiri, first queen to Rames II, says to Menenhetet I, "I will make love to you tonight by all three of My mouths." And here is Ramses II having at Menenhetet I:

> I heard a clangor in my head equal to the great door of a temple knocked open by the blow of a log carried forward at a run by ten good men, it was with the force of ten good men that He took me up my bowels, and I lay with my face on the stony soil of the cave while a bat screamed overhead.

Buggery and sodomistic rape seem to be the central sexual experiences of *Ancient Evenings*. With the bracing humorlessness of modern criticism, Peter S. Prescott, in *Newsweek*, notes: "Mailer, we know from past novels, has thought long and hard about anal rape, but here he outdoes himself." While Harold Bloom, in the *New York Review*, chimes in: "In *Ancient Evenings* [Mailer] has emancipated himself, and seems to be verging upon a new metaphysic, in which heterosexual buggery might be the true norm." (The true norm? Can this be true, Norm?) The connection between buggery and excrement is not shirked in this loathsome book in which excrement is intended to have magical, even divine, properties. "Certainly," says Menenhetet I, "I came to the sad conclusion that excrement was as much a part of magic as blood or fire, an elixir of dying Gods and rotting spirits desperate to regain the life they were about to lose." There is much more of this kind of blather about, as Menenhetet II puts it early in the novel, "the sinuosities of shit." So much of it, in fact, that another admirer of the novel, George Stade, wrote in the *New Republic*: "If you do not buy [Mailer's] notions of magic and the unconscious, of course, you will simply feel that Mailer and his novel are full of shit." To answer a two-clause sentence in two parts: I don't, and therefore I do.

WHY would Mailer write a novel so empty, so inert, so pretentious? Breaking through again, I fear. But breaking through to what—and why does he have to go all the way back to ancient Egypt to do it? Apart from the Cecil B. De Mille sets, the chit-chat about the significance of feces, and an untested recipe for successful reincarnation (impregnate a woman at the exact moment one is dying), *Ancient Evenings* is, for Norman Mailer, pretty much business as usual. I think he wrote an empty, inert, pretentious novel because, given the theories to which he is hostage, it is no longer possible for him to write a good novel.

Not that this has stopped critics from finding deep significance in *Ancient Evenings*. Professor Stade reads the book as "an on-and-off metaphor for the repressed unconscious." Mr. Prescott sees the book's "message (if it has one) . . . to be that the concentration of power at the top of the pyramid unhinges all stability: to rule all is to fear everyone." But the most ingenious reading comes from Harold Bloom, author of *A Map of Misreading*, who holds that "Mailer too wishes us to learn how to live, in an America where he sees our bodies and spirits as becoming increasingly artificial, even 'plastic' as he has often remarked." Professor Bloom, also the author of *The Anxiety of Influence*, finds Ernest Hemingway in *Ancient Evenings*, for he reads Hemingway into the character of Ramses II and Mailer himself into that of Menenhetet I, adding that "to have been bumbuggered by one's precursor is a sublime new variant on the sorrows of literary influence." Clearly, a critic's work is never done.

But then, in our era, neither is a novelist's. Since the publication of *Ancient Evenings*, Norman Mailer has been promoting his novel with furious energy. Through an endless round of interviews and a general media blitz, Mailer, with the aid of certain critics and reviewers, has pushed very hard to make his new novel seem important—so much so that one realizes that not long ago a new novel by Norman Mailer would have seemed an important literary event in its own right. Now it seems merely another media event—one more yelp in the contemporary racket—a novel that needs all the outside help it can get. "If it's no good," Mailer has said of this novel in more than one place, "I'm no good." That may be putting the case more starkly than is necessary, but then, one suddenly begins to think, perhaps it is true. Could a good writer have written so foul a book?

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What Made Him Run

THE LIFE OF HERBERT HOOVER: THE ENGINEER, 1874-1914. By GEORGE H. NASH. *Norton. 768 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by JAMES NUECHTERLEIN

HERBERT HOOVER'S early life was a romance, but no one, then or after, ever mistook Hoover for a romantic. In this first installment of a projected multivolume biography, George H. Nash leads us, by way of prodigious research and careful analysis, through the first forty years of Hoover's life, but in the end his subject eludes him and us. Hoover's was a flat and unresponsive personality, the stuff nonheroes are made of, and Nash, for all the high adventure and undeniable accomplishment he records, has a difficult time bringing his subject to life or getting the reader to care very much what happens to him.

This is not to say that Nash has labored in vain. Hoover remains one of the major figures of American political history in the first half of the 20th century, and it is past time that he received the same full-scale treatment that has been accorded Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. Nash, moreover, is a talented historian, and this first volume gives every promise that the completed biography will stand as the definitive scholarly work on Hoover. But scholarly virtue and measured, unobtrusive analysis do not always translate into captivating reading, especially with so veiled, inward, and undramatic a subject as Herbert Hoover. Hoover lived out the American dream, but he did it as if he were conducting an exercise in scientific management.

His life began idyllically in West Branch, Iowa, where Hoover, the son of a blacksmith (but a blacksmith with an entrepreneurial itch), spent his early years in a comfortable village atmosphere that he would later recall with great affection. But the idyll was short-lived: his father died in 1880 when Hoover was only six, and his mother succumbed to typhoid fever less than four years later. Hoover, along with an older brother and a younger sister, was left an orphan. Shortly thereafter, he moved to Oregon, where he was brought up by an uncle with whom he had somewhat strained relations.

It was no doubt the early loss of his parents that accounts for the attitude of "protective reserve" (the phrase is the author's) that Hoover adopted toward the world. If being orphaned so young forced on "Bert" Hoover the lessons of self-sufficiency, it also seems to have induced an emotional distancing that left him, as Nash indicates, something of an outsider in every environment. His was to be a strong but stunted personality.

Beginning in 1891, Hoover worked his way through the newly-opened Stanford University, aided by a small legacy from his mother. Hoover loved Stanford and had a successful undergraduate career both in and out of the classroom. Characteristically, his victories in student politics—he was elected treasurer of the student government on a ticket that rallied the nonfraternity students against the fraternities—owed more to his reputation for efficiency and his organizational talents than to his personal popularity. His education was utilitarian: he focused almost exclusively on courses in engineering and science, with hardly a venture into the humanities or social sciences. (His written English was atrocious; he barely satisfied the English-language competency requirement.)

Graduating with a degree in geology in 1895, Hoover quickly began to make a name in mining engineering. Most of his career was spent abroad, although residence outside the United States did nothing to dampen his intense nationalism (if anything it deepened it). By the eve of World War I, where Nash's account leaves off, Hoover had become one of the best-known —and wealthiest—men in his field.

His foreign career began in 1897 in the outback of western Australia, where he inspected, evaluated, and managed gold mines for the London firm of Bewick, Moreing, and Company. It was hard and demanding work in a barren outpost, but Hoover, intensely ambitious and highly—almost ruthlessly—efficient, prospered in an environment that put a premium on personal initiative and shrewd economic and technical judgment. He did not always get on well with his co-workers. His reserved, even brusque, personality and his insistence on having things his own way made Hoover a difficult man to work with throughout his career. But his enormous energy and considerable resourcefulness more than made up for his difficulties in personal relations.

In 1899, newly married, Hoover was sent to northern China, where he served both as technical assistant to the Chinese director of mines for the area and as representative of his employer's mining interests. The two roles inevitably came into conflict, and when they did, the interests of the former gave way to those of the latter. Hoover spent an eventful two-and-a-half years in China and he did well enough for Bewick, Moreing to make him a partner in 1901, but he was also involved in some stormy and controversial episodes. His efforts to reform and rationalize Chinese mining operations often met with frustration; as Nash puts it, Hoover found himself "an aggressive modernizer in a highly traditional society." Chinese resentment of foreign economic exploitation and cultural arrogance had reached a high point (the Boxer Rebellion broke out in 1900) and Hoover's customary blunt-spokenness and lack of tact made him something of an ugly American.

The most contentious of Hoover's

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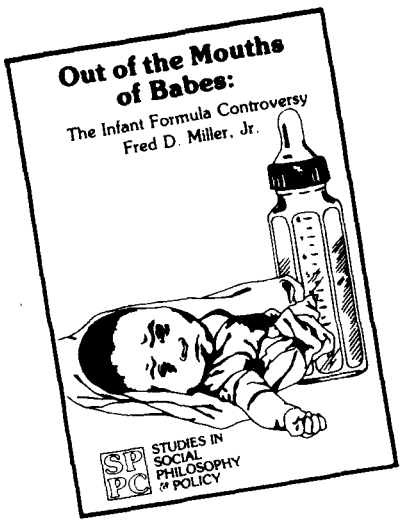
Chinese adventures—it eventuated in a major law suit in England—involved his role in the efforts of European investors to obtain management and control of the Kaiping coal mines, an episode of sinuous complexity that Nash sorts out with characteristic clarity (and sometimes numbing detail). Hoover was not a direct defendant in the suit, but he was deeply involved in this dubious attempt to wrest control of Chinese natural resources from Chinese hands. Years later, when political opponents attempted to use the incident against Hoover, he went to considerable lengths to excuse and obscure his participation in the scheme. As Nash shows, this was not the only time that Hoover rewrote the historical record to suit his own purposes.

After 1901, Hoover lived and worked in London, though he traveled constantly on behalf of his worldwide business interests. For the first seven years, he stayed with Bewick, Moreing; after 1908 he worked on his own. (The split with his old firm aroused bitter feelings on both sides; it too wound up in court.) He made a great deal of money. "If a man has not made a fortune by forty," Hoover liked to say, "he is not worth much." Reckoned in such terms, Hoover was worth a lot. He was now more financier than engineer. In retrospect, he liked to stress the technical and scientific aspect of his work; in his memoirs he referred to himself as an "industrial doctor." The reality, as Nash describes it, involved him mainly in "creating, floating, financing, and refinancing" various mining enterprises. He acted primarily as a middleman between mine owners in search of capital and potential investors. As an engineer/promoter, he frequently engaged in stock-market speculation. In a high-risk business, Hoover won considerably more often than he lost.

But Hoover was never interested simply in making money. He wanted to achieve and accomplish, and money was only one measure of success. He was also a genuine professional, anxious to improve the status of his trade, and he wrote a number of articles and books in his field, including a scholarly translation and annotation (done in collaboration with his wife) of a classic 16th-century treatise on mining, *De Re Metallica*. He thought of himself as a reformer, bringing order, efficiency, and higher technical and ethical standards to a field sorely in need of all of them. The establishment of techniques of scientific rationality and commonly-held ethical norms, Hoover hoped, would elevate mining engineering from a trade to a profession.

By 1914, however, even that was not enough. Eager to return home, financially secure, casting about for new challenges to his energies and ambitions, Hoover at forty began to consider a new career in public service. He had already become active as a member of the Stanford



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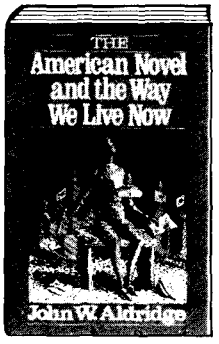

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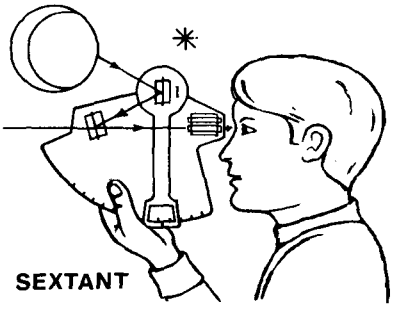

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Board of Trustees (he was appalled to learn that assistant professors were so badly paid as not to be able to afford even a single servant), and he gave thought at one time to becoming a newspaper publisher. In political terms, he identified with the progressive wing of the Republican party led by Theodore Roosevelt, though his social views, as described by Nash, remained entirely traditional.

PUBLIC life seemed, in some ways, an unlikely choice for Hoover. For all his managerial and executive abilities, his dealings with people were often awkward and uncomfortable. He was, on the one hand, aggressive, accomplished, able to work his will. Yet he remained an introverted personality, sensitive to criticism, repressed in emotion, possessed of no small talk and few social graces. He always preferred to work behind the scenes, out of the public spotlight. Generous and loyal to those close to him, he was combative when crossed and found it difficult to acknowledge failure or error. He was so ill at ease in the presence of others that he habitually averted his gaze from those he talked to. Yet for all that, his native talent and sheer force of will marked him as a man to reckon with. A lifetime of success had left him with apparently untroubled confidence in his own capacities.

George Nash lays this all out with admirable frankness. He clearly identifies with his subject, and he tends, in most situations, to cast Hoover's actions and personality in the most favorable light. Yet he has been scrupulous as well as exhaustive in his researches, and he presents evidence which those less sympathetic than he is to Hoover can use to arrive at conclusions considerably at odds with his own. One wishes at times that he would be more forthright in his own interpretative judgments, more inclined to assess the meaning of the massive body of information he has accumulated and organized so effectively. Perhaps more of that will emerge in the volumes yet to come.

We may reasonably expect that Hoover's life in politics and public service after 1914 will offer more general interest than his prior private career as engineer and businessman, but it is probably too much to hope that he will come alive to us as a human being. One concludes, though Nash would presumably not agree, that Herbert Hoover, for all his extraordinary ability and all the excitement of his life, must have been an utterly dull man to know.

Testimony

ZAKHOR: JEWISH HISTORY AND JEWISH MEMORY. By YOSEF HAYIM YERUSHALMI. *University of Washington Press. 133 pp. $17.50.*

Reviewed by DAVID SINGER

THE Jews, Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi shows in this splendid little volume, are the "fathers of meaning in history." Through the medium of the Bible, they were the first to assign a "decisive significance to history," thus forging a "new world view whose essential premises were eventually appropriated by Christianity and Islam as well." Moreover, only in Judaism is the injunction to remember [*zakhor*] "felt as a religious imperative to an entire people."

Nevertheless, the great 12th-century philosopher Moses Maimonides was expressing a view shared by virtually all Jews, from the close of the biblical period right down to modern times, when he wrote in his *Commentary to the Mishnah* that the *study* of history was a "waste of time." As Yerushalmi says, until our day "historiography itself [has] played at best an ancillary role among the Jews, and often no role at all."

Part of the purpose of *Zakhor* (which originated as a series of lectures at the University of Washington) is to account for the absence of a well-developed Jewish historiographical tradition. Another aim of the volume is to explore those channels which did serve to sustain and reinforce Jewish historical memory. What gives *Zakhor* a special poignancy, however, is the per-

DAVID SINGER, *co-editor of the* American Jewish Year Book, *is currently working on an intellectual biography of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik.*

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sonal element: Yerushalmi's effort (*he is Salo Wittmayer Baron Professor of Jewish history, culture, and society at Columbia University*) to understand himself as a Jewish historian, "not within the objective context of the global scholarly enterprise, but within the inner framework of Jewish history itself." Here then is a book in which a leading Jewish historian reflects upon the seeming irrelevance of his own work for the ongoing Jewish historical enterprise.

IF THERE is a rival claimant to the Jews for the "discovery" of history, it is undoubtedly the ancient Greeks. But as Yerushalmi points out, history in the Greek view had "no truths to offer"; the Greeks saw no "ultimate or transcendent meaning to history as a whole." The concept of a meaningful universal history originated in biblical Israel, and reflected an "intuitive and revolutionary understanding of God":

> The pagan conflict of the gods with the forces of chaos, or with one another, was replaced by a drama of a different and more poignant order: the paradoxical struggle between the divine will of an omnipotent Creator and the free will of his creature, man, in the course of history; a tense dialectic of obedience and rebellion. . . . Thrust reluctantly into history, man in Hebrew thought comes to affirm his historical existence despite the suffering it entails, and gradually, ploddingly, he discovers that God reveals Himself in the course of it.

Given the absorption of biblical Israel with God's acts in history, it is not at all surprising that Israel looked upon memory as "crucial to its faith and, ultimately, to its very existence." The Red Sea could be crossed but once; the historical recollection of the event needed to be preserved. Still, as Yerushalmi notes, the Bible did not command the Jews to become a "nation of historians." Rather, the primary means of keeping the memory of the past alive was "ritual and recital." Thus the three great pilgrimage festivals—Passover, Tabernacles, and the Feast of Weeks—while retaining ties to the yearly agricultural cycle, became commemorations, respectively, of the Exodus *from Egypt, the sojourn in the desert*, and the revelation of the Torah on Mt. Sinai.

As for actual historical writing in the Bible, which Yerushalmi rates as the "most distinguished" in the whole of the ancient Near East, it came into being as a natural concomitant of the biblical preoccupation with remembering: ritual and recital inevitably overflowed into historical narrative. *What Yerushalmi finds so impressive about the Bible as history is its* faithful rendering of the reality of the human situation—this, despite the fact that God is the "hero" of the story. The Bible offers us history on a "very human scale": "Historical figures emerge not merely as types, but as full-fledged individuals. Chronology, by and large, is respected. There is a genuine

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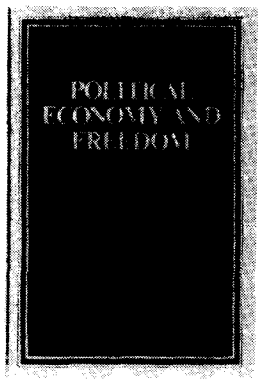

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sense of the flow of historical time and of the changes that occur in it."

But then all this changed. After the close of the biblical period, the historiographical impulse ceased to be an operative factor among the Jews. From the time of Josephus Flavius in the 1st century C.E. to Joseph Ha-Kohen in the 16th, not a single Jewish writer referred to himself as a historian. Jewish life during this phenomenally long epoch was shaped by the precepts of talmudic Judaism, and the rabbis of the Talmud evinced not the slightest interest in the historiographical enterprise. Even the history of the talmudic period itself, Yerushalmi points out, "cannot be elicited from its own vast literature. Historical events of the first order are either not recorded at all, or else . . . are mentioned in so legendary or fragmentary a way as often to preclude even an elementary retrieval of what occurred."

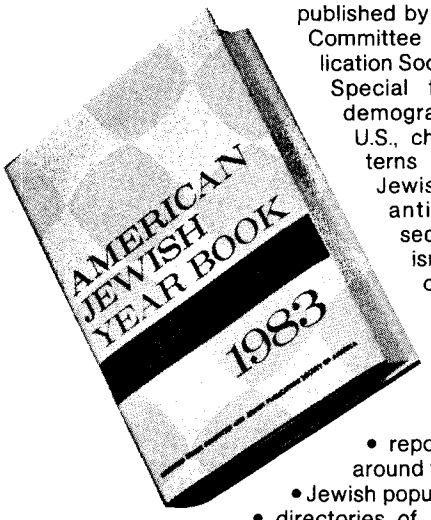
Yet if the rabbis did "not see fit to take up where biblical history broke off," Yerushalmi (echoing a line of thought first put forward by Jacob Neusner nearly twenty years ago) insists that they in no way rejected the biblical concept of meaningful history. In fact, it was precisely the rabbis' "total and unqualified absorption of the biblical interpretation of history" that lay behind their lack of interest in mundane history:

> For the rabbis the Bible was not only a repository of past history, but a revealed pattern of the whole of history, and they had learned their scriptures well. They knew that history has a purpose, the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, and that the Jewish people has a central role to play in the process. They were convinced that the covenant between God and Israel was eternal, though the Jews had often rebelled and suffered the consequences. Above all, they had learned from the Bible that the true pulse of history often beat beneath its manifest surfaces, an invisible history that was more real than what the world, deceived by the more strident outward rhythms of power, could recognize.

Possessing the key to history, the rabbis had no need for historiography.

Only once during the whole of the pre-modern period was there a burst of historiographical activity in Jewish society. This brief flowering occurred during the 16th century, when no fewer than ten major historical works appeared. One such volume—Azariah de' Rossi's *Light for the Eyes*—clearly reflects the impact of Italian Renaissance models, but most of the others—including Solomon Ibn Verga's *The Scepter of Judah* and Samuel Usque's *A Consolation for the Tribulations of Israel*—were produced either by exiles from Spain and Portugal or by the descendants of exiles. This leads Yerushalmi to suggest that their primary stimulus was "the great catastrophe that . . . put an abrupt end to open Jewish life in the Iberian Peninsula"—in effect, emptying Western Europe of Jews. What is significant in terms of Yerushalmi's larger theme, however, is that the Jewish historical works of the 16th century failed to have an impact beyond their time; they did not lay the groundwork for an ongoing endeavor. Moreover, even in their own time, they were overshadowed by the Lurianic Kabbalah, an awesome metahistorical myth which posited the origins of Jewish historical fate in a primal cosmic flaw. Once again, the Jews turned their backs on mundane history.

This brings us to modern times, in which there has been a veritable explosion of Jewish historical writing. Yerushalmi's chapter on the subject bears the title "Modern Dilemmas," and its subtitle is "Historiography and Its Discontents." In part, Yerushalmi's own "doubts and misgivings" have to do with his "ironic awareness that the very mode in which I delve into the Jewish past represents a decisive break with that past." The secular premises of the modern historical outlook, in other words, place him at odds with what was



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taken for granted in all previous conceptions of the Jewish past, i.e., the "belief that divine providence is not only an ultimate but an active causal factor in Jewish history, and the related belief in the uniqueness of Jewish history itself." Yerushalmi also finds it troubling that the modern historian is somehow expected to function as a "restorer of Jewish memory." He observes:

> Intrinsically, modern Jewish historiography cannot replace an eroded group memory which . . . never depended on historians in the first place. . . . Ultimately Jewish memory cannot be "healed" unless the group itself finds healing, unless its wholeness is restored or rejuvenated. But for the wounds inflicted upon Jewish life by the disintegrative blows of the last two hundred years the historian seems at best a pathologist, hardly a physician.

Given the deeply felt need among contemporary Jews for a "usable past," Yerushalmi is not surprised that anti-historical currents are very much alive. He notes matter-of-factly that the findings of modern Jewish historical scholarship have "hardly been faced, let alone internalized" and that literature and ideology have been "far more decisive" in shaping Jewish conceptions of the past. As examples, Yerushalmi points to the widespread view of Hasidism which "totally ignores both its theoretical bases and the often sordid history of the movement," and ideas about the Holocaust that are more the product of the "novelist's crucible" than of the "historian's anvil." In general, Yerushalmi believes that the Jews "await a new, metahistorical myth."

Is there anything that the historian should do in this situation? For Yerushalmi, there is no possibility of a "return to prior modes of thought." "For better or worse," he writes, "a particular and unprecedented experience of time is ours, to be reflected upon, perhaps to be channelled in new directions." The modern Jewish historian can only testify to the truth of Jewish history as he discovers it, and to the truth of his own situation as he finds it. *Zakhor*, beautifully conceived and written, is testimony of the highest order.

Bad News

THE CONFIDENCE GAP: BUSINESS, LABOR, AND GOVERNMENT IN THE PUBLIC MIND. By SEYMOUR MARTIN LIPSET and WILLIAM SCHNEIDER. *Free Press. 414 pp. $19.95.*

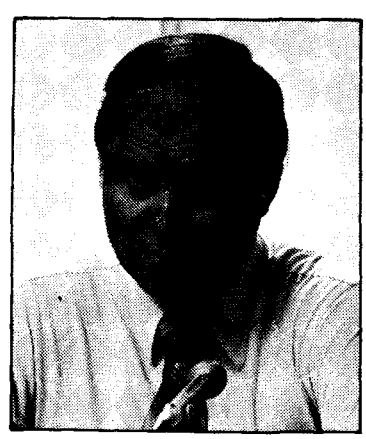
Reviewed by MELVILLE J. ULMER

The Confidence Gap is an attempt to describe and explain the trend of American attitudes toward prevailing social and economic institutions from the late 1950's to almost the present day. The principal source of information utilized is the running record of public-opinion polls, which have burgeoned in number and variety during the last three decades. The authors—Seymour Martin Lipset and William Schneider—are both eminently equipped for the task, with a panoply of credentials in sociology, political science, and information-systems analysis. Their principal finding, for which convincing evidence is provided, is that public opinion has soured on institutional leaders in practically all walks of life. But their explanation for this trend is controversial, and their briefly proposed remedy even more so.

To establish the factual foundation for their major generalization, a recitation of almost endless surveys is required, which does not make for easy reading. It is, nevertheless, an unavoidable and troublesome chore. For the uninitiated, seeking valid information from polls on so flighty a topic as "attitudes"—given peculiarities in wording, sampling, and sundry other statistical quirks—may seem as inviting as puzzling out with the ancients "what song the sirens sang." But the authors breeze through undaunted and apparently with success.

MELVILLE J. ULMER *is professor of economics at the University of Maryland, author of numerous professional books and articles, and a frequent contributor to* COMMENTARY *and other periodicals.*

CONFESSION OF A CATHOLIC
Michael Novak



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The polls all point in the same, mutually reinforcing, direction. No one is spared in the rising tide of public animus, from doctors and unions to the Supreme Court, but the most telling blows of all are reserved for government and business. As one might expect, when broken down politically, more anti-business and less anti-government sentiment is disclosed among self-designated liberals and Democrats, and just the opposite emphasis among conservatives and Republicans; but the *dominant* national reaction is univocal.

THE present administration in Washington will not be surprised to learn that the most common complaint about government, voiced through the surveys, is that it "wastes a lot of money we pay in taxes." Eyebrows might rise, however, at the proportion assenting to this statement, which grew from 43 percent in 1958 to 78 percent in 1980. (Lipset and Schneider do show that nearly all indicators of public confidence improved during Reagan's first years in office, but only by slight, barely perceptible margins.) Yet while most common, waste was not the most rapidly *rising* complaint or the most probing. The proportion of respondents agreeing with the statement, "You cannot trust government to do the right thing most of the time," more than tripled from 1958 to 1980, starting with 23 and ending with 73 percent. Upward thrusts almost as great appeared in those affirming that government (1) "Is run for the benefit of a few big interests," and (2) "Pays little attention to what people think when it decides what to do."

Significantly, the gauge of public disfavor shot up most briskly in 1964-70, the tumultuous years of the Vietnam war, radical dissent, riots, and demonstrations, with a further pronounced upsurge after Watergate. But the rise persisted, though it was slower, in nearly all the other years surveyed.

The same pattern appears in the polls on business. Suspicion, cynicism, and even animosity are disclosed in large quantity—along with, I would add parenthetically, some plain confusion about what "social responsibilities" can be properly expected of competitive business firms in the absence of generalized legal constraints. At any rate, always rationally or not, anti-business sentiment rose sharply, as Lipset and Schneider show.

Beginning in the mid-1960's, bulging majorities over time agreed with the following statements: (1) Profits are the major goal of business even if it means unemployment and inflation; (2) Profits mainly benefit stockholders and management; (3) Major companies do not care enough about protecting the public from environmental and pollution problems; (4) Large companies are too powerful in politics; (5) Business keeps its profits high and cuts jobs and wages. The proportion believing that "the profits of large companies make things better for everyone" diminished from more than half of all respondents in 1959 to 37 percent in 1979, and then recovered very slightly to 39 percent under Reagan in 1981.

WHAT is the meaning of this deep-seated "loss of confidence," increasing in formidability with the sureness of a rolling snowball? Does it portend a fundamental change? Lipset and Schneider pose this question and answer: not right away. The reason is that most "Americans still believe in the legitimacy and vitality of the American system." In the late 1970's, they report, substantial majorities linked the American free-enterprise system to high living standards, individual freedom, and advanced technology. When asked to check off which of thirteen national attributes they would consider "major causes of United States greatness," three-fourths cited our political institutions and almost two-thirds selected "our free-enterprise system." The high-water mark came shortly after Reagan's presidential victory. Then, 79 percent agreed with the statement, "The private business system in the United States works better than any other system yet devised for industrialized countries" while a full 90 percent averred that the United States is "the very best place in the world to live."

Responses were not in every respect so supportive, especially when broken down by educational level. When asked whether "a big change is needed in our form of government," 65 percent of the college-educated respondents said "no" and 35 percent "yes." Of respondents who did not finish high school, the count was 54 percent "no" and 46 percent "yes." Other questions determined that those at the lower end of the educational ladder, far more than others, favored a substantial shift toward greater governmental participation in social and economic affairs.

Even so, the majority at all schooling levels asserted that the chief problems of the day stemmed from "individuals in office" rather than "government in general." Lipset and Schneider take this to be the most stabilizing attitude of all. "Hope seems to spring eternal," they write, that the future will cast new and nobler leaders. They see a core of faith in basic institutions which is weakened and menaced by a pronounced and spreading anti-business sentiment together with distrust of authorities, institutional managers, men of affairs, doyens and decision-makers in nearly every branch of society.

How, then, can the downturn in public approval be explained?

"We suggest," Lipset and Schneider write,

> that the increase in political dissatisfaction was not a cognitive or ideological change; it was rather a response to events, and to the perception of events, primarily in the political sphere. The vast majority of the population . . . were unhappy because political leadership was proving ineffective in dealing with massive social and political problems, like war, race relations, and the economy. . . . All major sources of power, particularly but not exclusively government, labor, and business, were affected by this negative assessment.

So part of the explanation would seem to lie in objective events. It is well to recognize, however, as the authors do not, that the postwar period *before* 1964—when the downturn in public sentiment began—also had its share of unhappy experiences. These included the Korean war, political scandals in

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the executive branch, the McCarthy hearings, the cold war, four recessions, racial conflicts, and one of the longer periods of depressed business activity from 1958 to 1963. Per-capita disposable income actually rose materially faster *after* 1963 than it had in the decade before that year. What was quite new in the later period was inflation and the crime wave (which the authors mention), plus the scary drop in America's international prestige.

LIPSET and Schneider also offer the *perception* of events as a causal factor, and here the correlation with the change in public opinion may be more obviously pronounced. Mass media, the authors recognize, are "perhaps the major source of information concerning the country's condition," and the trouble, they say, is the "bias" of newspapers and especially TV toward "bad news." Earlier in the book the authors also note in passing that "certain groups may have an incentive to sustain the belief that things are worse than they really are," but here the emphasis is upon an apparently compulsive selectivity in reporting. "Bad news," they paraphrase Gresham's Law, "drives out the good."

Now neither Lipset nor Schneider would maintain that headlines *ought* to proclaim in edition after edition that most people have survived the day without accident, so in further exposition they qualify the charge by asserting, rather circularly, that there was simply more bad news to report, and by placing a special stress on the role of television, which "brings bad news to a much larger and 'inadvertent' audience than was the case before."

But there is an alternative explanation for the disturbing impact of the media on American attitudes to which other observers have called attention. A succinct statement of the case is that of Midge Decter, writing on behalf of the Committee for the Free World:

> The makers of opinion—by which we mean those who dominate the country's press and media, its universities and schools, its arts, and its religious institutions—have to a dangerous extent become automatic adversaries of their own society. As such, they have been spreading notions that undermine and demoralize us. Among these notions are that American society is profoundly unjust; that American wealth is based on plundering the poor, both at home and abroad; and that American policy is on the side of tyranny while the Marxist-Leninist revolutions it opposes are on the side of good. Finally, there is the idea that American life in general is somehow brutal and dehumanizing.

From this point of view, it appears that the public's loss of confidence—or "alienation," as Lipset and Schneider often express it—flows primarily from the misleading reporting of those with confidence-destroying objectives. The obvious remedy, then, would be to counter unsettling propaganda with the truth, as prominently and widely as possible. But, at least as far as economic institutions are concerned, *The Confidence Gap* offers a differ-

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ent remedy. "The future of American business," Lipset and Schneider write,

> depends in some part on whether American society for the next generation continues to resemble its past or moves toward more European types of political, economic, and social arrangements. To go the latter route would probably require that the Democratic party and the American labor movement become much more committed to socialism and social-democratic policies and manifest more opposition to business than they have ever done. It is true that, beginning in the 1930's, both Democrats and the labor movement moved toward the acceptance of what can be described as social-democratic, welfare-state orientations. . . . The fact remains, however, that the United States has not had a well-developed socialist movement or social-democratic party.

Thus, here and elsewhere in the book Lipset and Schneider hold that an essential—if not the sole—means of lifting public morale is to remove the blemishes in our prevailing institutions which depress it, and that the avenue to this objective is a further shift toward the "democratic socialism" of Western Europe. We may put aside the serious question—already raised—of how accurately opinion-poll responses reflect actual social flaws. More relevant is that the Lipset-Schneider proposal for improvement could hardly have come at a less propitious juncture of history, whatever need for reforms there may be.

For the glow of the European model, which once attracted domestic liberals like moths to a flame, has dimmed dramatically in recent years. A report this spring from Herbert Giersch, a prominent West German economist, relates that the notorious "English disease" has over the last decade crossed the Channel and spread.* His charge is supported by reports from the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the European Commission (Common Market), and other outstanding economists and businessmen of the area. The symptoms of the English disease, now said by Giersch and the others to be "infecting all the continent," are economic lethargy and debilitation; a weakened will to work, sapped by high public allowances; a reluctance to invest, fed by record-high taxes and busy public regulation; and a sagging level of production, conspicuously depressed by rising labor costs, plummeting productivity, and the fabulously ineffectual performance of nationalized industries.

The OECD etimates that 16 million citizens of its European members are on the dole. This group of predominantly social-democratic countries now accounts for more than half the industrialized world's total unemployment, while contributing only 40 percent to its total gross product. Primarily what thrives is inflation. Governments are turning to you-know-where for help.

In enshrining European socialism as the model for improvement in the United States, Lipset and Schneider, I would conclude, are looking in the wrong direction.

* Quoted in the *Wall Street Journal*, April 20, 1983.

The Red Army—and Us

INSIDE THE SOVIET ARMY. By VIKTOR SUVOROV. *Macmillan. 304 pp. $15.95.*

THE THREAT: INSIDE THE SOVIET MILITARY MACHINE. By ANDREW COCKBURN. *Random House. 338 pp. $16.95.*

Reviewed by ELIOT A. COHEN

S.L.A. MARSHALL, the great combat historian of the United States Army, once wrote that "The basic study in all warfare is the mind and nature of the probable enemy, compared to which a technical competence in the handling of weapons and engines of destruction is of minor importance." According to Marshall, what needs to be known is not only the quantity and technical characteristics of an opponent's military apparatus—his "order of battle," in military jargon—but his culture and psychology, the mind, the logic, and the ethos that shape his military organization.

These two books, both of which attempt to describe Soviet weapons, military organization, and doctrine, must be measured by the extent to which they also succeed in describing and explaining Soviet military culture. This task is an exceptionally difficult one, for the Soviet Army by design and historical accident has swaddled itself in wraps of myth, secrecy, and disinformation.

The author of *Inside the Soviet Army* is identified as a former Soviet Army officer, a veteran of fifteen years' service with troops and staffs, who fled to the West and now writes under a pseudonym. In his introduction to the book, Sir John Hackett, the eminent retired British general, assures us of the author's credentials and experience, including participation as a young company commander in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia. Although General Hackett expresses reservations about some of Suvorov's conclusions, he gives the book high praise, recommending it to all who "wonder about the makeup and outlook of the armed forces in the free world's main adversary."

The book is uneven. It contains long, dull stretches of interest only to the specialist, in which Suvorov describes the structure of the Soviet high command, the military district system, and the rivalries among the various Soviet military services. But Suvorov more than redeems these tedious passages with his description of the Soviet approach to war, of how Soviet officers and soldiers live and think.

To take material matters first: Suvorov describes an army devoted to a rigorous simplicity of equipment, and offers a number of intriguing examples. Thus, the Soviets vary the calibers of most of their projectile weapons by a few millimeters, a practice of which Suvorov approves since it bespeaks a high degree of military realism. In one passage he evokes the likely consequences in 1941 when, before this policy was adopted, the Soviets introduced a 7.62 mm pistol into an arsenal already containing a 7.62 mm rifle:

> In wartime when everything is collapsing, when whole armies

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and groups of armies find themselves encircled, when Guderian and his tank army are charging around behind your own lines, when one division is fighting to the death for a small patch of ground, and others are taking to their heels at the first shot, when deafened switchboard operators, who have not slept for several nights, have to shout someone else's incomprehensible orders into telephones—in this sort of situation absolutely anything can happen. Imagine that, at a moment such as this, a division receives ten truckloads of 7.62 mm cartridges. Suddenly, to his horror, the commander realizes that the consignment consists entirely of pistol ammunition. There is nothing for his division's thousands of rifles and machine guns and a quite unbelievable amount of ammunition for the few hundred pistols with which his officers are armed.

Or take a grimmer piece of Soviet military logic: according to Suvorov, the Soviet forces on the front lines in Eastern Europe do *not* get the most modern Soviet equipment. This may seem odd to Americans and other Westerners, who tend to assume that the units most likely to enter battle first ought, in fairness, to receive the best equipment. The Soviets, however, reason that their first echelon will probably suffer near destruction in the opening battles of a campaign; hence the most modern equipment should go to the follow-on troops, who will win the war. It was this policy, argues Suvorov, which enabled the Soviets to absorb the German *Blitzkieg* in 1941 and then surprise the invaders with masses of troops equipped with T-34 tanks, at the time the best in the world.

In short, Suvorov shows how thoroughly the Soviets have absorbed the bitter lessons of the Eastern front in World War II. They favor mass and simplicity over quality and technical refinement (which does not mean that they are incapable of producing sophisticated weapons). They favor weight of fire over accuracy, which is why they possess thousands of easily operated heavy mortars, weapons as destructive as they are simple. They design their weapons in the knowledge that most of their users will perish in battle; their aim is not to enhance a soldier's chances for survival, but to maximize the brief utility of his equipment and himself.

Soviet tactical doctrine reflects this same, brutally pragmatic approach to war. Suvorov recounts a tactical problem that he has often posed to Western officers. Suppose three Soviet motor-rifle companies are advancing: one has fallen apart under fire, the second is advancing slowly but suffering heavy losses, and the third has endured a counter-attack and, having lost its officers, is retreating. The regimental commander has three tank companies and three artillery batteries to deal with the situation. What does he do? Never, according to Suvorov, has his audience given the correct reply, which is to throw all resources behind the second, advancing company, and the devil take the other two. "My audience smiles," writes Suvorov, "they believe they have found the Achilles heel of Soviet tactics. But I am always irritated—for this is not weakness, but strength."

Suvorov does not minimize the weaknesses of the Soviet Army. He questions its ability to conduct a sustained war (despite the Soviet capacity for industrial and civic mobilization) and he has no illusions about the average soldier's commitment to the regime. He predicts that in a lengthy war, Soviet troops would desert in the millions—assuming, of course, that they could safely find their way to enemy lines. He describes in considerable detail the inefficiency of a military-service system which allows senior recruits to bully and rob the younger ones, a system (unlike that of virtually all Western armies) which possesses no seasoned cadre of professional noncommissioned officers to train, discipline, and set standards for the rank and file. Nonetheless, he makes clear his belief that the Soviet military ma-

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chine, because of its brutal realism (which extends to training with real, if diluted, nerve gas), makes a formidable opponent.

SUCH is not the view of Andrew Cockburn, whose book offers a sustained case for the fragility of the Soviet military system. Selecting bits of evidence from Suvorov and other writers, he argues that the Soviet threat is far smaller than we have been led to believe. In four sets of essays—on Soviet personnel, land power, nuclear and chemical weaponry, and sea power—Cockburn hammers at the theme that Soviet bureaucrats and soldiers are incompetent and dispirited, their weapons ill-constructed and obsolete, their nuclear and chemical strength chimerical, their Navy fatally constricted by geography and inferior equipment.

Some of his points are valid. If the American Army finds it difficult to cope with Spanish-speaking soldiers, imagine the perplexities of the polyglot Soviet Army, made up of antagonistic and mutually incomprehensible ethnic groups. American generals worry about the morale of the armed forces when only a third of all enlisted men sign up for a second tour: in the Soviet Union, the comparable figure is 1 percent.

Never, however, does Cockburn wrestle with the Soviet Union's military successes and strengths. He does not confront the brute fact that the Soviets did, after all, beat the *Wehrmacht*, probably the most efficient military machine of the 20th century. And this occurred, it should be remembered, only a few years after the Russo-Finnish war had supposedly demonstrated the incurable military incompetence of Communist regimes. Cockburn asserts that the recent battles beween Israelis and Syrians in the Bekaa Valley of Lebanon prove the complete superiority of American over Russian equipment, but he neglects to point out that on the one side there was first-line and improved American weaponry operated by a superb army and on the other Soviet export models (of a kind discussed by Viktor Suvorov) operated by a stolid but third-rate Arab force.

Cockburn does not adequately examine—and cannot conjure away—the staggering numerical advantages of the Soviet Army, particularly in such key items as tanks and artillery pieces. As American campaigns in northwest Europe in 1944 and 1945 demonstrated, superior numbers of inferior tanks (in our case, Shermans) backed by vast quantities of artillery, *can* provide victory—perhaps not elegant or easy victory, but victory nonetheless. He ignores completely the advantages of geographical location and the existence of subservient client states which further enhance Soviet military power. Not to mention the pervasive secrecy which in 1941, for example, enabled the Soviets to surprise the invading Germans with a force almost twice as large as that estimated by German intelligence.

Most important of all, Cockburn fails to weigh adequately the military advantages of Soviet ruthlessness. In quality of organization, equipment, and training, the Soviet armed forces are indeed the inferior of some of those in the West. Nonetheless, the Soviets are increasingly willing to project force and to sustain long-term and bloody military commitments abroad. The steadily accumulating proof of the use of chemical and biological weapons in Afghanistan and Laos indicates that the Soviets' callousness toward their own troops is more than matched by a willingness to destroy their enemies by any means available. As Viktor Suvorov's book suggests, in war a complete lack of scruple confers advantages as substantial as they are chilling, advantages which can outweigh deficiencies in tactics or equipment.

COCKBURN's undisguised disdain for the Soviet armed forces is both excessive and reckless. Indeed, he finds the Soviet military apparatus so ludicrously hollow that he must take pains to explain why anyone in the West should regard it seriously. He comes up with two contradictory answers: first, the Soviet threat is a sham, concocted by self-interested American bureaucrats and generals who knowingly and deliberately distort the truth in order to win power and money from an intimidated Congress; second, the Soviet threat is the hallucination of stupid and credulous soldiers and analysts, gulled by Soviet propagandists. Thus, throughout the book, Cockburn alternates between *frissons* of horror at the bellicosity of Western generals and a genial contempt for their competence. He pursues the latter theme so far that he undercuts his own argument, claiming at one point that American generals cannot even devise workable weapons for their own troops. According to this view, the next war will take place between two armies of incompetents equipped with unusable arms.

In fact, the real agenda of this book is an attack not on the Soviet but on the American military establishment. On the penultimate page Cockburn writes: "Today we see militarism in the ascendant both in the Soviet Union and in the United States. . . . Only by understanding the true motivations and actions of the military bureaucrats, both in the East and at home, can we hope to frustrate them. . . ." Presumably the person who wrote these words knows that few Soviet citizens will read his book, and none will act on its message. One must therefore conclude that his aim is less to analyze the outlook and methods of Soviet military men than to discredit those of their Western counterparts.

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